A HANDBOOK FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Prepared and Compiled by

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to the following colleagues for their contributions in the preparation of this handbook:

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Foreword

Dear Colleagues:

It is a pleasure to welcome you as a partner in carrying out certain tasks in the establishment and academic operation of the Arab Open University. The AOU considers the involvement of external examiners in the evaluation of our various methodologies of student assessment as an integral part of quality assurance.

As we are still embarking on our initial stages of laying down efficient, effective and fair methods of student assessment, we consider the provision of constructive avenues of assistance toward higher achievement by our students an intertwined paradigm of our mission of quality education. In turn, we consider these times quite opportune for dynamic changes for the better. Your input, as external examiners, is viewed by all of us as highly significant. We do ask for your candid and fair opinions; and we take them seriously.

At the AOU, we do not view student assessment as a goal in itself. Rather, we view the process as an instrument of assistance in forging new and innovative ways of taking our students' achievements to higher levels. In this sense, it is a continuous learning experience for all of us.

Professor Mohammad Awwad, Dean of the Faculty of Language Studies, was asked to prepare and compile, within the embodiment of this Handbook, concise and useful pieces of information related to your tasks as external examiners. Some deal with policy issues; while others deal with procedures of operation. For a job well done, I offer him my thanks and gratitude.

The *External Examiners' Handbook* is intended to serve primarily as a briefer, and not as a comprehensive document on tasks of the same. Nevertheless, I hope that our colleagues, serving as external examiners, as well as our colleagues in the Faculties that serve the concerned programs of study, find this Handbook of interest and use.

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Professor of IT & Telecommunications
Vice Rector for Academic Affairs
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O. Introduction

This handbook is intended to serve as a briefer for external examiners with data necessary for acquainting them with AOU by-laws, rules and regulations, and procedures that govern the assessment of core courses for AOU's B.A. Honours Programmes in English Language and Literature, Computer Science and Information Technology, and Business Administration (Economics and Systems tracks). It covers the following areas:

- AOU policy concerning the award of degrees in its three UKOU-based programmes
- AOU assessment and examination policy
- Examination committees: structure and function
- AOU policy on plagiarism
- Job specification of tutors, branch course coordinators, general course coordinators, and programme coordinators.
- Criteria for appointing external examiners
- Marking guidelines: General and Specific
- Quality Assurance
- External Examiner remuneration and honorarium
- OUVS appendix on the Role of external examiners

I. AOU policy on the award of degrees

As per its agreement with the UKOU, AOU offers the following three programmes:

- B.A. Honours Programme in English Language and Literature.
- B.A. Honours Programme in Business Studies/Economics track.
- B.A. Honours Programme in Business Studies/Systems track.
- B.A. Honours Programme in Computer Science and Information Technology.

In order for a student to receive any of the above degrees he/she must successfully complete a minimum of (128) credit hours (480 credit points), (32) of which comprise the general university requirement, and (96) (360 credit points) the core programme requirement.

The breakdown of the General (Mandatory) University requirement is as follows for the three programmes.

- Mandatory University Requirement (18 credit hours)

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
GR101- Independent Study Skills	3	10
TU170 – Learning On-Line	3	10
AR111- Arabic Communication Skills I	3	10
AR112 – Arabic Communication Skills II	3	10
EL111- English Communication Skills I	3	10
EL112- English Communication Skills II	3	10
Total	**18**	**60**

- A minimum of fourteen credit hours from the following lists of University electives

A. English Language Programme

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
DD121 – An Introduction to the Social Sciences I	8	30
DD122 – An Introduction to the Social Sciences II	8	30
GR111 – Arab Islamic Civilization	3	10
MU120 – Open Mathematics	8	30
MST121 – Using Mathematics	8	30
T171 – You, Your Computer, and the Net	8	30
T172 – Working With Our Environment	8	30
T173 – Engineering the Future	8	30
GR131 – General Branch Requirement	3	10

B. Business Administration Programme (Economics Track)

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
T172 – Working With Our Environment	8	30
MST121 – Using Mathematics	8	30
GR111 – Arab Islamic Civilization	3	10
T173 – Engineering the Future	8	30
GR131 – A Special Topic/Branch Based	3	10
MU120 – Open Mathematics	8	30
B631 – Managing	4	15
B632 – Managing People	4	15

C. Business Administration Programme (Systems Track)

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
T173 – Engineering the Future	8	30
MST121 – Using Mathematics	8	30
GR111 – Arab Islamic Civilization	3	10
DD121 – An Introduction to the Social Sciences I	8	30
DD122 – An Introduction to the Social Sciences II	8	30
GR131 – A Special Topic/Branch Based	3	10
MU120 – Open Mathematics	8	30
B631 – Managing	4	15
B632 – Managing People	4	15

D. Information Technology and Computing Programme

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
DD121 – Introduction to the Social Sciences I	8	30
DD122 – Introduction to the Social Sciences II	8	30
GR111 – Arab Islamic Civilization	3	10
MU120 – Open Mathematics	8	30
T172 – Working with Our Environment	8	30
T173 – Engineering the Future	8	30
GR131 – General Branch Requirement	3	10

Home Faculties of the University mandatory requirement: 18 credit hours

AR111
AR112   **Offered by the Faculty of General Studies**
GR101

EL111
EL112   **Offered by the Faculty of Language Studies**
DD121
DD122

TU170   **Offered by the Faculty of Computer Studies**

Home faculties of University electives included in the list of courses electives stipulated for the three programmes (14-16 credit hours)

DD121   **Offered by the Faculty of Language Studies**
DD122

GR111
MU120
T172   **Offered by the Faculty of General Studies**
T173
GR131

MST121   **Offered by the Faculty of Computer Studies**
T171

Course Descriptions of the University Mandatory and Elective Requirements

AR111 – Arabic Communication Skills I – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course aims at consolidating the students' skills and competence in listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing. It also aims at introducing the students to the basics of Arabic syntax, and literary appreciation.

AR112 – Arabic Communication Skills II – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course builds on and extends the knowledge and skills developed in AR111, and introduces the students to different aspects of Arab culture as reflected in the writings of leading figures both old and new. It also trains the students in research methodology, and report writing.

EL111 – English Communication Skills I – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This is a theme-based integrated skills course which aims to upgrade the student's proficiency level to the extent that he/she can communicate with ease and confidence and utilize English in pursuing his/her university education.

EL112 – English Communication Skills II – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course complements and builds upon English 111. It particularly seeks to develop the reading, writing, listening, and study skills which students need in order to meet the demands of distance learning university education.

GR111 – Arab Islamic Civilization - *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course explores main themes in the heritage of the Arab Islamic Civilization with focus on noteworthy contributions and positive interaction with other cultures and civilizations.

GR131 – General Branch Requirement - *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course deals with current issues of interest to socio-economic development at the local and regional levels.

GR101 – Independent Study Skills – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This course aims at helping students develop a wide range of effective study techniques and strategies necessary to help them succeed in their university studies. It focuses on note-taking and making use of different study media, writing reports, using study resource materials and references and preparing for examinations.

DD121-An Introduction to the Social Sciences (I):- *30 points/ 8 credit hours*
   Understanding Social Change Part 1.
This course is about people and how they act individually and collectively. It deals with three major topics: questioning identity, interaction between the worlds of the natural and the social, and the ordering of lives.

DD122-An Introduction to the Social Sciences (II): *30 points/ 8 credit hours*
   Understanding Social Change Part 2.
This course is about understanding more key debates, ideas and arguments about the contemporary social sciences, race and ethnicity, the city and globalization, the city and knowledge and communication. It also deals with the relationship between

structure and agency and focuses on uncertainty and diversity in the post-war and analyses the consequences of globalizing world on culture, economics and politics.

TU170 – Learning On-Line: Computing with Confidence – *10 points* (3 credit hours)
This is a 12-week course that provides an introduction to computing and the on-line world. Students learn about software applications such as word processing, databases and electronic mail. They take part in on-line discussions, search the web and author simple web pages using HTML. This course is taught entirely on-line. The total teaching and assessment material is published on the course web site, to which only registered students have access. Students work both individually and in groups with fellow students on collaborative projects, supported by a personal tutor.

MU120 – Open Mathematics – *30 points* (8 credit hours)
This course builds students' confidence and helps them to incorporate mathematical thinking into their everyday life. It looks mathematically at matters of general interest including prices, earnings, health, music, art, maps, motion and rainbows. It develops the key skills of communication as well as students' own learning and performance. Students will cover statistical, graphical, algebraic and numerical concepts and techniques. In addition, they will be introduced to iteration and mathematical modeling, as well as being able to interpret slopes of graphs. Students will also learn how to use a graphing calculator. Formal calculus is not included.

T171 – You, Your Computer and the Net – 30 points / 8 credit hours How did the PC and the Internet get to their present state? What are the implications of the computer revolution? How does the Internet affect business? This course will help students develop an understanding of the computer industry, the Internet and e-business. It will also help them to use the computer for effective information searching and analysis. **Students are also taught about various Computer Ethics concepts such as not to violate Intellectual Property (IP) rights, not to indulge in software piracy and not to engage in any unethical practices while conducting electronic commerce etc.** They need to be familiar with the Windows environment and have some experience of navigating the web. The teaching and assessment for T171 are entirely online.

T172 – Working With Our Environment: Technology for a Sustainable Future *– 30 points* (8 credit hours)
This course is an introduction to environmental issues and the role of technology in today's fast paced computer world. It will suit the needs of students whether they intend to study technology or if they have a general interest in learning how to shape a sustainable future. It takes students progressively from environmental impacts of their lifestyle to the global issues of technological and economic development. They will also learn general skills such as basic numeracy, critical reading, report and essay writing. This course introduces more specific skills and knowledge required for higher-level environment or technology courses. The themes are: You and the Environment, Travelling Light, Food Chains, and Thinking Globally; supported by files on Energy, Resources, and Human and Ecosystem Health. The course also includes computer-based activities.

T173 – Engineering the Future – *30 points* (8 credit hours)
From design concepts to the manufacturing of products, this course examines the range of human activity that is 'engineering'. It introduces the context of how engineers operate, including issues such as risk assessment and patented law. It looks at current engineering practice and at some of the developments in engineering methods and applications that will shape the future. It offers a general introduction both for those who simply have an interest in what engineering is and how it is practiced in modern society, and for those who are considering engineering at higher level of study.

MST121 - Using Mathematics – *30 points* (8 credit hours)
This course covers a broad introduction to the nature of mathematics and its uses in the modern world. This course shows how mathematics can be used to investigate and answer questions from science, technology and everyday life using a range of fundamental techniques, in particular, discrete mathematics (including matrices), calculus and statistics. Use of computer software (MathCAD) is part of the course. The skills of communicating results and defining problems are also developed. This course will give students a complete foundation for higher-level mathematics and physics.

Core programme courses, course prerequisites, course description, and suggested course distribution over semesters

FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

Core Program Courses (96 credit hours):

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
A123: An Introduction to the Humanities	16	60
U210A- The English Language: Past, Present and Future I	8	30
U210B- The English Language: Past, Present and Future II	8	30
A210- Approaching Literature	16	60
E300- English Language and Literacy	16	60
A319- Literature in the Modern World	16	60
E303- English Grammar in Context	16	60
Total	**96**	**360**

Prerequisites

No.	Course Number	Title	Prerequisite	Credit Hours	Credit Points
1	A123	An Introduction to the Humanities	EL112	16	60
2	U210A	The English Language: Past, Present, and Future Part I	EL112	8	30
3	U210B	The English Language: Past, Present, and Future Part II	U210A	8	30
4	A210	Approaching Literature	A123	16	60
5	E303	English Grammar in Context	U210B	16	60
6	E300	English Language and Literacy	U210B	16	60
7	A319	Literature in the Modern World	A210	16	60

Course Descriptions

A123 – An Introduction to the Humanities – *60 points / 16 credit hours*
> This course provides students with a lively and varied grounding in the disciplines of art history, literature, philosophy, classical studies, history. It will help students to express themselves more clearly and to develop the skills of reading, analysis and interpretation they will need before they move on to more specialized courses at Level 2.

A210 – Approaching Literature – *60 points / 16 credit hours*
> This course is a literary study and analysis of the realist novel, romantic writings, as well as Shakespeare and the Canon. It introduces students to a wide range of literary

texts from the second half of the sixteenth century through the mid twentieth century, and also prepares them to study literature at a more advanced level.

U210A – The English Language: Past, Present and Future (Part I) – *30 points / 8 credit hours*

This course is about the history of English, structural differences between varieties of English in current use and the use of English in everyday speech and writing, and in a range of specific contexts from the workplace to literature.

U210B – The English Language: Past, Present and Future (Part II) – *30 points / 8 credit hours*

This course investigates the acquisition of English in monolingual and bilingual contexts, English in the education system as a first language or a foreign language, English in relation to new communications technology, and English as a global language.

E300 – English Language and Literacy – *60 points /16 credit hours*

This course provides a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of oral and written English, and the social, cultural, and political processes behind its use. It also introduces research into language and literacy.

A319 – Literature in the Modern World – *60 points / 16 credit hours*

The course focuses on the study of aspects of cultural change through which 'English Literature' has become "literature in English", and includes sections on Modernism, Englishness, literature and ideology, language and gender and literature and history.

E303– English Grammar in Context - *60 points / 16 credit hours*

This course builds upon U210A and U210B foundation courses. It provides an advanced grammatical description based on real corpora combined with a systematic functional approach. It demonstrates how analytical techniques apply to real-world data and problems. It also employs recent developments in the application of ICT to the analysis of English.

Course Distribution over Semesters

Year	Semester	COMPULSORY COURSES	ELECTIVES
1	1	• **TU 170 : Learning Online: Computing with Confidence** /3 credits/10 points • ***AR 111: Arabic Communication Skills (I)** /3 credits/10 points • ****EL 111: English Communication Skills (I)** /3 credits/10 points	• 6-8 credit hours to be chosen from the list of University Electives
	2	• **GR 101: Self Learning Skills** /3 credits/10 points • **AR112: Arabic Communication Skills (II)** /3 credits/10 points • **EL112: English Communication Skills (II)** /3 credits/10 points	• 6-8 credit hours to be chosen from the list of University Electives
2	1	• **A123: An Introduction to the Humanities** /16 credits/60 points • **U210A: The English Language: Past, Present, and Future: Part I** /8 credits/30 points	
	2	• **A123: An Introduction to the Humanities** /16 credits/60 points - CONTINUED from 1st semester • **U210B: The English Language: Past, Present, and Future: Part II** /8 credits/60 points	
3	1	• **A210: Approaching Literature** /16 credits/60 points • **E303:English Grammar in Context** /16 credits/60 points	
	2	• **A210: Approaching Literature** /16 credits/60 points - CONTINUED from 1st semester. • **E303: English Grammar in Context** /16 credits/60 points - CONTINUED from 1st semester.	
4	1	• **E300: English Language and Literacy** /16 credits/60 points • **A319: Literature in the Modern World** /16 credits/60 points	
	2	• **E300: English Language and Literacy** /16 credits/60 points - CONTINUED from 1st semester. • **A319: Literature in the Modern World** /16 credits/60 points - CONTINUED from 1st semester.	

NOTES:
*Enrollment in AR111 and AR112 is determined by the student's grade on the Arabic Placement Test.
** Enrollment in EL111 and EL112 is determined by the student's grade on the English Placement Test as well as by the rules governing enrollment in the English Orientation Program.

FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISRATION STUDIES (ECONOMICS TRACK)
Core Program Courses (96 credit hours):

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
DD121 Introduction to the Social Sciences I	8	30
DD122 Introduction to the Social Sciences II	8	30
B200 Understanding Business Behavior	16	60
B202 Understanding Business Functions	16	60
B300 Business Behavior in a Changing World	16	60
DD202 Economics and Changing Economies	16	60
D319 Understanding Economic Behavior: Households, Firms and Markets.	16	60
Total	**96**	**360**

FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDIES (SYSTEMS TRACK)
Core Program Courses (96 credit hours):

Course Number and Title	Credit hours	Credit points
T171: You, Your Computer, and the Net	8	30
T172: Working With Our Environment	8	30
B200: Understanding Business Behavior	16	60
B202: Understanding Business Functions	16	60
B300: Business Behavior in a Changing World	16	60
T205: Systems Thinking: Principles and Practice	16	60
T306: Managing Complexity: A Systems Approach	16	60
Total	**96**	**360**

Prerequisites

Compulsory Courses	Pre-Requisite	Credit hours	Credit points
B200		16	60
B202		16	60
B300		16	60
DD202		16	60
D319	DD202	16	60
T205	TU170	16	60
T306	T205	16	60
DD121	EL112	8	30
DD122	DD121	8	30
T171	TU170	8	30
T172		8	30

Course Descriptions

T171 – You, Your Computer and the Net – 30 points / 8 credit hours How did the PC and the Internet get to their present state? What are the implications of the computer revolution? How does the Internet affect business? This course will help students develop an understanding of the computer industry, the Internet and e-business. It will also help them to use the computer for effective information searching and analysis. **Students are also taught about various Computer Ethics concepts such as not to violate Intellectual Property (IP) rights, not to indulge in software piracy and not to engage in any unethical practices while conducting electronic commerce etc.** They need to be familiar with the Windows environment and have some experience of navigating the web. The teaching and assessment for T171 are entirely online.

B200 - Understanding Business Behavior – *60 points / 16 credit hours*
This course explains how businesses are structured, how they work, how their environments influence them, and how they try to control competitive market pressures. Understanding the complexities and uncertainties of all this is not easy, so the course discusses different approaches and ways of seeing organizations and markets. It enables students to evaluate and use information and theories, thus improving their capacity for rigorous assessment. Finally, the course defines and develops three groups of related business skills: study and presentation, IT, and numeracy. Much use is made of computer conferencing for learning and debate between students and dedicated conferencing tutors. Course tutors are expected to participate.

B202 – Understanding Business Functions – *60 points / 16 credit hours*
This course develops an understanding of how organizations work through the contributions of five key business functions – human resources, information, marketing, operations, accounting and finance – and how those are integrated. Working with a selection of textbooks, you will look at the key practices of the 'traditional' business functions and the contributions they make to organizations, individually and collectively. Case studies and specially written texts enable you to see the origins, rationale, limitations and strengths of business functions from the perspectives of various stakeholders. You will develop skills in finding and organizing information, preparing simple presentations, and using basic software packages and computer conferencing. The student will need a personal computer and access to the internet.

B300 – Business Behavior in a Changing World – *60 points / 16 credit hours*
This course is designed to develop an understanding and knowledge of strategic organizational issues and how organizations respond to change in their environments. The course has three main teaching modules: decision-making, strategy and policy. Students look at how organizations make strategic decisions and consider rationality and routines, decision methods and decision processes. They analyze how organizations develop strategy, notions of core competence and strategic innovation. A range of policy and environmental concepts and cases that demonstrate the impact of the macro-environment on organizations are studied. Students are made aware of the boundaries of strategy in terms of relationships between strategies at the level of the firm, the industry, the nation, the region and globally. Three groups of related business skills are developed: study and presentation skills, IT and numeracy skills, and computer conferencing for learning and debate. Course tutors are expected to participate.

B631– Managing– *15 points / 4 credit hours*

Designed as a first course in management, this course aims to develop confidence and impact as a not-for-profit manager. It covers the managerial role and shows how an individual can continually develop their competence as a manager. It explains and enables students to use fundamental management processes and techniques in a not-for-profit context. The course then helps them to understand and respond to the environment in which they work, introducing models of organizational culture. It addresses the values and range of stakeholders that affect the role of management in a non-profit context.

B632 – Managing People– *15 points/ 4 credit hours*

This course covers core people management skills and processes to help managers be more effective with people at work. It considers what explains and motivates people's behavior at work and how the manager's own management style can get the best from colleagues and staff. The course then covers organizational entry: job design, recruitment and induction. It addresses working conflict, or across boundaries within and beyond their own organization or sector. The course concludes by considering how they supervise, appraise and develop staff, and help to change the way they work.

DD121-An Introduction to the Social Sciences (I):- *30 points/ 8 credit hours*
Understanding Social Change Part 1.

This course is about people and how they act individually and collectively. It deals with three major topics: questioning identity, interaction between the worlds of the natural and the social, and the ordering of lives. **(Offered by the Faculty of Language Studies)**

DD122-An Introduction to the Social Sciences (II): *30 points/ 8 credit hours*
Understanding Social Change Part 2.

This course is about understanding more key debates, ideas and arguments about the contemporary social sciences, race and ethnicity, the city and globalization, the city and knowledge and communication. It also deals with the relationship between structure and agency and focuses on uncertainty and diversity in the post-war and analyses the consequences of globalizing world on culture, economics and politics. **(Offered by the Faculty of Language Studies)**

DD202 – Economics and Changing Economies – *60 points / 16 credit hours*

This introduction to economics examines important economic issues of our time and how economists tackle them. It teaches both economic theory and an understanding of changing economies. The course recognizes the increasing integration of the world economy and draws on examples from the UK and other countries. Topics include market competition and cooperation; market structures and firms' decision-making; the state's role in the economy; money and financial markets; European integration; booms and slumps; unemployment and inflation; managements of the national economy; poverty, wealth and redistribution; ecological constraints on growth. The course teaches basic techniques of economic analysis and data analysis.

D319 – Understanding Economic Behavior:
Households, Firms and Markets- *60 points / 16 credit hours*

This course is designed to be taken after DD202 Economics and changing economies. Households, firms, and markets are three of the most important types of institution making up the economy. This course develops a critical understanding of fundamental economic issues relating to these three institutions by using mainstream

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economic theory and less orthodox interdisciplinary approaches. The course examines the behavior of economic agents by investigating the outcomes of their decisions and introduces ways of trying to model the processes of decision-making as well as the outcomes.

T172 - Working with Our Environment: Technology for a Sustainable Future - *30 points / 8 credit hours*

This course is an introduction to environmental issues and the role of technology in today's fast paced computer world. It will suit the needs of students whether they intend to study technology or if they have a general interest in learning how to shape a sustainable future. It takes students progressively from environmental impacts of their lifestyle to the global issues of technological and economic development. They will also learn general skills such as basic numeracy, critical reading, report and essay writing. This course introduces more specific skills and knowledge required for higher-level environment or technology courses. The themes are: You and the Environment, Traveling Light, Food Chains, and Thinking globally; supported by files on Energy, Resources, and human and ecosystem health. The course also includes computer-based activities. **(Offered by the Faculty of General Studies)**

T205 – Systems Thinking: Principles and Practice – *60 points / 16 credit hours*

T205 helps students make headway with complex situations they meet at work or in the community: 'How could we explore this opportunity?' 'How can I make sense of this situation?' 'How could I improve things?' Students learn to explore issues, identify components, analyze interrelationships, develop an overall understanding, and consider intervention possibilities. Cases include topical environmental, organizational and information technology issues to do with e-commerce, the environment, risk management and social support. The course includes Web teaching and First-Class e-mail and conferencing.

T306 – Managing Complexity: A Systems Approach – *60 points / 16 credit hours*

This course is for anyone who wants to learn how to think differently and creatively about complex issues, and to manage them in ways that lead to improvement. We are confronted constantly by images of world as unknowable, random and complex, but are given no means of understanding the complexity or revolving the problems it creates. The systems approach was designed to deal with this. Building on the discontinued course T301 Complexity, management and change, this course applies the most recent and innovative developments in systems thinking to areas such as information systems, organizational change and learning, sustainable development and the environment, and professional practice.

Course Distribution Over Semesters

Year	Semester	Economics track		Systems track	
		Compulsory courses	**Electives**	**Compulsory courses**	**Electives**
1	1	**TU170:** Learning Online: computing with confidence (3 credits) (10 points) **AR111:** Arabic Communication Skills (I) (3 credits) (10 points) **EL111:** English Communication Skills (I) (3 credits) (10 points)	6-8 credit hours from the list of University electives	**TU170:** Learning Online: computing with confidence (3 credits) 10 points **AR111:** Arabic Communication Skills (I) (3 credits) 10 points **EL111:** English Communication Skills (I) (3 credits) 10 points	20-30 credit hours from the list of University electives
	2	**AR112:** Arabic Communication Skills (II) (3 credits) (10 points) **EL112:** English Communication Skills (II) (3 credits) (10 points) **GR101:** Self-Learning Skills (3 credits) (10 points)	6-8 credits from the list of University electives	**AR112:** Arabic Communication Skills (II) (3 credits) 10 points **EL112:** English Communication Skills (II) (3 credits) 10 points **GR101:** Self-Learning Skills (3 credits) 10 points	20-30 credits from the list of University electives
2	1	**B200:** Understanding Business Behavior (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) **DD121:** An Introduction to the Social Sciences I (4/8 credits) (15/30 points)		**B200:** Understanding Business Behavior (8/16 credits) 30/60 points **T171:** You, Your Computer and the Net (4/8 credits) 15/30 points **T172:** Working with our Environment: Technology for a Sustainable Future (4/8 credits) 15/30 points	
	2	**B200:** Understanding Business Behavior (cont'd) (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) **DD121:** An Introduction to the Social Sciences I (cont'd) (4/8 credits) (15/30 points)		**B200:** Understanding Business Behavior (cont'd) (8/16 credits) 30/60 points **T171:** You, Your Computer and the Net (cont'd) (4/8 credits) 15/30 points **T172:** Working with our Environment: Technology for a Sustainable Future (cont'd) (4/8 credits) 15/30 points	
3	1	**DD202:** Economics and Changing Economies (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) **DD122:** An Introduction to the Social Sciences II (4/8 credits) (15/30 points) **B202:** Understanding Business Functions (8/16 credits) (30/60 points)		**T205:** Systems Thinking: Principles and Practice (8/16 credits) 30/60 points **B202:** Understanding Business Functions (8/16 credits) 30/60 points	
	2	**DD202:** Economics and Changing Economies (cont'd) (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) **DD122:** An Introduction to the Social Sciences II (cont'd) (4/8 credits) (15/30 points) **B202:** Understanding Business Functions (cont'd) (8/16 credits) (30/60 points)		**T205:** Systems Thinking: Principles and Practice (cont'd) (8/16 credits) 30/60 points **B202:** Understanding Business Functions (cont'd) (8/16 credits) 30/60 points	
4	1	**D319:** Understanding Economic Behavior: Households, Firms and Markets (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) **B300:** Business Behavior in a Changing World (8/16 credits)		**B300:** Business Behavior in a Changing World (8/16 credits) 30/60 points **T306:** Managing Complexity: A Systems Approach (8/16 credits) 30/60 points	

| | 2 | **D319:** Understanding Economic Behavior: Households, Firms and Markets (cont'd) (8/16 credits) (30/60 points)
B300: Business Behavior in a Changing World (cont'd) (8/16 credits) (30/60 points) | | **B300:** Business Behavior in a Changing World (cont'd) (8/16 credits) 30/60 points
T306: Managing Complexity: A Systems Approach (cont'd) (8/16 credits) 30/60 points | |

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The core programme courses, course prerequisites, course description, and suggested course distribution over semesters are as follows:

The programme of Information Technology and Computing, offered by the Faculty of Computer Studies, consists of 131 credit hours (490 points):

Requirement Type	Credit hours	Points
Information Technology and Computing Programme Requirements	**99**	**370**
University Requirements	**32**	**120**
- **Elective**	**14-16**	**54-60**
- **Mandatory**	**18**	**58**
Total	**131**	**490**

Core Program Courses (99 credit hours)

Course Number and Title	Prerequisite	Credit hours	Credit points
T171 – You, Your Computer, and the Net	TU170	8	30
MST121 – Using Mathematics		8	30
M206 – Computing: An Object – Oriented Approach	T171	16	60
T209 – Telematics	T171	16	60
MT262 – Putting Computer Systems to Work	M206	8	30
M301 – Software Systems and Their Development	M206	16	60
T305 – Digital Communications	T209	16	60
T471 – Telematics (Project)	**	8	30
CS490 – Selected Topics in Computer Science	**	3	10
Total		99	370

** Departmental approval (Third or Fourth year level)

Course Descriptions

T171 – You, Your Computer and the Net – 30 points / 8 credit hours How did the PC and the Internet get to their present state? What are the implications of the computer revolution? How does the Internet affect business? This course

will help students develop an understanding of the computer industry, the Internet and e-business. It will also help them to use the computer for effective information searching and analysis. **Students are also taught about various Computer Ethics concepts such as not to violate Intellectual Property (IP) rights, not to indulge in software piracy and not to engage in any unethical practices while conducting electronic commerce etc.** They need to be familiar with the Windows environment and have some experience of navigating the web. The teaching and assessment for T171 are entirely online.

MST121 – Using Mathematics – 30 points / 8 credit hours It covers a broad introduction to the nature of mathematics and its uses in the modern world. This course shows how mathematics can be used to investigate and answer questions from science, technology and everyday life using a range of fundamental techniques, in particular, discrete mathematics (including matrices), calculus and statistics. Use of computer software (MathCAD) is an essential part of the course. The skills of communicating results and defining problems are also developed. This course will give students a complete foundation for higher-level mathematics and physics.

M206 - Computing: An Object- Oriented Approach - 60 points/ 16 credit hours This course focuses on computing for the next decade covering the fundamentals of modern object and network computing. Its practical approach teaches new ideas and skills, such as analytical techniques that equip students to computer - based solution to real problems. They learn programming using the object - oriented language Smalltalk. This innovative course makes the best use of appropriate media: printed and computer - based materials, television, CD-ROM and Internet.

T209 – Information and Communication Technologies: People and Interactions - 60 points / 16 credit hours This course develops and enhances key skills while providing students with the knowledge to understand current and future developments in information and communications technologies. The course comprises five independent modules. In Touch and Informed uses mobile telephony, personal digital assistants and the Internet to introduce the basic technology of computers and communications and the means to describe and model such systems. Talking with Computers identifies the central ideas of human technology interaction and, through a combination of software and design tools, enable students to construct speech recognition applications. Network Management provides an overview of how computer networks meet the needs of organizations, both through the deployment of networking components and through the associated management products such as SNMP. A simulation package enables students to design and model network configurations based on the CSMA/CD protocol. Cyborg explores some of the social dimensions and interpretations of our changing relationship with technology. A rich learning resource supports a group project in which students explore their own technologically mediated interactions. Security tackles the concerns posed by the explosive growth of communication systems and the associated issues of authentication, authorization, and repudiation. Simulation software enables students to explore various encryption algorithms, while the latest version of PGP

supports experimentation with public/private key systems. The course includes three computer-marked assignments, four single-weighted tutor-marked assignments and one double-weighted group project tutor-marked assignment. An individual project undertaken during the final stages of the course provides the examinable component.

MT262 - Putting Computer Systems to Work - 30 points / 8 credit hours This course tackles the problem of how to get a computer to do something useful It sets out to analyze problems and design solutions in such a way that a computer can be used to carry out the solution. The course develops skills in analysis and design, in addition to practical programming in a widely used C++ language, using non-object and object-oriented approaches. It includes elementary work with Windows™ programming.

M301 - Software Systems and Their Development - 60 points / 16 credit hours This course investigates how large items of software are produced, from analysis through design to implementation and testing. It examines state-of-the-art topics such as Java programming, Unified Modeling Language (UML) for the analysis and design of applications, frameworks and patterns, and studying the principles underlying concurrent systems. Managing the process of developing quality software, human factors and professional issues are also addressed in this course. The course is based on three set books and a case study and includes a significant amount of practical work using the Java Integrated Development Environment and UML Modeling Tool provided with the course.

T305 - Digital Communications - 60 points / 16 credit hours This course is appropriate for anyone with an interest in either telecommunications or data and computer communications, including the Internet. Examples are drawn from both mobile and fixed networks, and topics include: protocols (such as the internet protocols: TCP/IP); network management and reliability; digital representation of sounds and images; routing, switching and signaling; coding and modulation; and high-speed networks. Underpinning these topics include material on modeling, including time and frequency domain models, statistical concepts and the representation of complex systems. This course is set in context by material on the applications and issues of digital communications. There are six computer-marked and seven tutor-marked assignments.

CS490 - Selected Topics in Computer Science - 10 points / 3 credit hours This course will discuss topics of current interest in the various fields of IT in the form of specialized course modules. Some of the modules planned for studies under this course include Computer Ethics, Database Management, Artificial Intelligence, Neural Networks and Pattern Recognition, Image Processing etc. A project has to be undertaken in a particular course module and a project report has to be submitted by the student at the end of the course.

- ➢ **Module 1: Computer Ethics**

  We are living in an Information Age in which our daily lives are governed by computers that carry and process tons of information that is the bloodline of our modern societies. These same computers and the information that they carry can also be used in very malicious manner. This module on computer ethics deals with various ethical issues of computer usage in this Information Age. It deals with the important topics of positive use of computers, malicious and negative use of computers, ten commandments of Computer Ethics, cyberspace and cyber crime, Hacking and computer viruses, Privacy and personal freedom in cyberspace, Piracy and copyright issues, Computer and cyber law, Role of government in computerized society, Artificial Intelligence and Cyborg etc. This module has a multidisciplinary nature in that it discusses various social, ethical, business and judiciary aspects of computer technology usage.

- ➢ **Module 2: Database Management**

  This advanced computing module offers perspectives on relational databases, based on the storage of data as tables. This module begins with an introduction to the use of the databases in information systems, with examples. This is followed by a theory of relations that are applied to the representation of models of data, and practical implementation in the database language SQL. The development of a database system is covered and finally, issues to do with a broader view of relational databases.

- ➢ **Module 3: Artificial Intelligence**

  (Under Preparation)

- ➢ **Module 4: Neural Networks and Pattern Recognition**

  (Under Preparation)

- ➢ **Module 5: Image Processing**

  (Under Preparation)

Course Distribution over Semesters

Year	Semester	Compulsory Courses	Electives
1	1	• TU170 – Learning On-line: Computing with Confidence – 10 points / 3 credit hours • AR111 - Arabic Communication Skills I - 10 points / 3 credit hours • EL111 - English Communication Skills I - 10 points / 3 credit hours • GR101 – Independent Study Skills - 10 points/3 credit hours	• 3 to 4/8 credit hours (10-15/30credit units) to be chosen from the list of University Electives
	2	• T171 – You, Your Computer and the Net – 30 points/8 credit hours • AR112 - Arabic Communication Skills II- 10 points / 3 credit hours • EL112 - English Communication Skills I - 10 points / 3 credit hours	• 3 to 4/8 credit hours (10-15/30credit units) to be chosen from the list of University Electives
2	1	• T171 – You, Your Computer and the Net – (cont'd) • M206 - Computing: An Object-Oriented Approach - 60 points/16 credit hours • T209 – Information and Communication Technologies: People and Interactions - 60 points/16 credit hours	
	2	• M206 - Computing: An Object-Oriented Approach – (cont'd) • T209 – Information and Communication Technologies: People and Interactions – (cont'd)	
3	1	• M301 - Software Systems and Their Development - 60 points/16 credit hours • MT262 – Putting Computer Systems to Work – 30 points/8 credit hours • MST121 – Using Mathematics – 30 points/8 credit hours	

Year	Semester	Compulsory Courses	Electives
	2	• <u>M301 - Software Systems and Their Development</u> (cont'd) • <u>MT262 – Putting Computer Systems to Work</u> – (cont'd) • <u>MST121 – Using Mathematics</u> – (cont'd) • <u>CS490 – Selected Topics in Computer Science</u> – 30 points/8 credit hours	
4	1	• <u>T471 – Telematics (Project)</u>- 30 points/8 credit hours • <u>T305 – Digital Communications</u> - 60 points/16 credit hours	
	2	• <u>T471 – Telematics (Project)</u> - (cont'd) • <u>T305 – Digital Communications</u> - (cont'd)	4 credit hours (15 credit units) to be chosen from the list of University Electives

II.   AOU Assessment and Examination Policy

The following are excerpts from AOU Examination Regulations:

1. The final grade for each course comprises the marks allocated for ongoing assessment and the final examination. Ongoing assessment and the final examination are equally weighted. TMAs are allocated 35%, quizzes 15%, and the final examination 50%.

2. For a student to pass a course, he/she must pass the final examination, i.e. must get a grade of 25/50.

3. All students taking a course (across the AOU branches) must sit the same final examination, and shall present their AOU identification card in order to enter the examination room.

4. Student final examination scripts shall be marked at the relevant Branch under the supervision of the Branch Director in coordination with the Dean concerned.

5. Student final examination scripts shall be anonymous and identified by code not by the student's name.

6. Final examination papers (FEP) must indicate time allocation and mark weighting for each question and for the FEP as a whole.

7. Final examinations must take into consideration that not all questions are obligatory unless there are exceptional cases justified by the Faculty Examination Committee (FEC) to the AOU Central Examination Committee (CEC).

8. Time allocation for final examinations shall be as follows:

# Course credit hours	Time allocation in hours
2-4	2-3
8	2-3 at the end of each semester*
16	2-3 at the end of each semester

9. A student unable to sit the final examination due to an acceptable medical excuse, compelling or force majeure reasons shall be given a grade of Incomplete (I), and shall be allowed to retake the final examination again. Otherwise, he/she shall receive a grade of Fail (F).

10. Marking TMAs shall be closely monitored. Samples of marked TMAs by all tutors shall be monitored by the Branch Staff Tutor. Other samples are to be sent to the General Course Coordinators at the AOU Headquarters. Levels of monitoring are as follows:

* If the course is offered over two semesters.

Level A: is appropriate for 60-point (16-credit hour) courses, for tutors with an excellent record of teaching. At this level of monitoring one sample from every third assignment (TMA) and examination paper for each tutor will be monitored.

Level B: is used mainly for 30 point (8-credit hour) courses as well as for short course. At this level one sample from every assignment (TMA) and examination paper for each tutor, will be monitored.

Level C: is a compulsory level for all new courses, and all newly-appointed tutors on first presentation of a new course. At this level three samples from every assignment (TMA) and examination paper for each tutor will be monitored.

Level D: is used at the request of the monitor; Staff Tutor, Branch Director, Course Coordinator or Dean of the relevant faculty. At this level six samples from each assignment and examination paper for each tutor will be monitored.

It is the AOU policy that Level C be used on high population new courses. Experienced tutors outside their probation period (first two years of tutoring at the AOU) may be monitored at Level B. In addition to the above standard four levels, there are non-standard levels, where 100% monitoring can be implemented. The concerned Examination board Dean should be contacted for advice on non-standard requirements.

It is a university policy that every tutor, staff tutor, and academic member of staff should be aware of the purposes and procedures of monitoring.

The above outlined AOU policy on monitoring is designed to provide a basis for academic units in the university to devise and develop their Code of Practice which will reflect the unit's special nature. It is also intended to be a reference document for any one involved directly or indirectly in the monitoring function and processes.

(Taken from AOU Accreditation document (section 9.3.3))

11. In case of illness and emergency, final examinations can be given, as scheduled, in the hospital in the light of the student's condition.

12. Any student who does not sit the final examination or submit the project comprising an essential component of the examinable component must provide a medical or force majeure excuse to the tutor, who refers it (with his/her comments) to the staff tutor, who refers it to the Branch Director for study and review in the Branch Examination Committee for taking the appropriate decision subject to the following:
    - The proper documentation for the excuse shall be provided within a week after holding the examination, or the end of the excuse.
    - If the excuse is accepted, the student shall receive an "Incomplete" for the course. He/She shall also sit for the final examination of this course when held for the second time the course is offered. Otherwise, he/she shall be considered to have withdrawn from the course and the letter grade (F) shall be entered in his record.
    - If the excuse is not accepted, the student shall receive the numerical mark of zero for the course.

13. A numerical mark zero shall be recorded for each TMA not submitted by its cut-off date unless the student provides a medical or force majeure excuse to the Branch Director, in which case the excuse is to be submitted within seven days (of the cut-off date); in justified extraordinary cases the TMA can be handed in within two weeks of the cut-off date subject to approval by the Branch Director on the recommendation of the staff tutor.

The number of TMA late submissions is limited to one TMA for 30 point courses (8 credit-hour courses), and two TMAs for 60-point courses (16-credit-hour courses). The final TMA for a course must be handed in by its cut-off date unless there are extraordinary force majeure circumstances approved by the Branch Director on the recommendation of the staff tutor.

14. Marking TMAs by tutors shall be monitored by providing samples of each tutor's marked TMAs, to be photocopied and sent/given to the Course Coordinator in order to make sure all tutors use the same marking criteria and provide students with appropriate feedback in respect to their mistakes and how to alleviate them.

If a student has special circumstances that had a negative effect on his/her study and preparation for the course, and doing the TMAs such as delays by the University in sending the education materials, delays by the tutors in returning to the students their marked TMAs, and long periods of illness of the student or his close relatives, he/she must report the situation (in writing) to the staff tutor supported by all relevant documents two weeks before handing in or sending the last TMA for the course.

The staff tutor shall refer these cases to the Branch Director who refers them to Branch Examination Committee, who refer their recommendation to the Central Examination Committee for taking the appropriate decision.

15. Students with special needs (the blind, the deaf, etc.) who think their impairment negatively affected their doing the TMAs and other ongoing assessment tasks must provide the staff tutor with supporting evidence to be referred to the Branch Director, who shall present it to the Branch Examination Committee, who shall submit their recommendation to the Central Examination Committee for taking the appropriate decision.

16. Students with special needs should explain their circumstances to the Branch Examination Committee through their staff tutor so that the necessary equipment is provided and/or the examination duration is extended. They must provide the necessary information three weeks before the date set for the final examination or submission of the research project.

17. All TMAs must be properly marked and returned to the student within a week from the date of submission.

18. A student who gets an (F) for a course must take it again, submit all TMAs, take all quizzes required for ongoing assessment, and sit the final examination and/or submit the required research project(s).

19. A student can withdraw from a course provided that he/she submits a written request to the Department of Admissions and Registration. The letter of request can be sent by mail, e-mail, or fax. The student should keep the required receipts or documents, and withdrawal must take place before the date set for the final examination, in which case the letter grade (W) is entered for the course.

20. Students can appeal the letter grade (F) to the Branch Examination Committee within two weeks after sending them the course results. Reasons of appeal together with supporting documents must be provided.

21. The Branch Examination Committee shall review appeal cases as per procedures and measures in effect at the University. Students can appeal the BEC decision to the Branch Director. If the Branch Director agrees to the appeal(s), he shall refer it/them to the Faculty Examination Committee for giving the final decision.

22. Any student with a cumulative average of less than 2 points shall be put on academic probation and shall not be allowed to register for more than eight credit hours for the following semester until he/she raises his/her cumulative average to the required number of points, i.e. 2 points.

23. For a student to graduate he/she must have a cumulative average of two points on a four-point scale.

III. AOU Examination Committees

The Branch Examination Committee (BEC)

This committee is chaired by the Branch Director. Its membership is as follows:
- Two Faculty members representing two different programmes.
- The admission and registration officer.
- One staff tutor (pending).

Its major functions are to:
- Prepare a plan for conducting and marking final examinations consistent with procedures in effect.
- Review student appeals concerning their final grades. Students have the right to appeal. BEC's decision.
- Review course final results before sending them to the Faculties.
- Suggest appropriate additions and amendments dealing with Examination general policy.

The Faculty Examination Committee (FEC)

This committee is chaired by the Dean of the Faculty. Its membership is as follows:
- Two Headquarter based Faculty members.
- The chair (General Course Coordinator) of the course under review.
- The external examiner.

Its major functions are to:
- Review student appeals referred to it by the Branch examination Committee. Students can appeal FEC's decisions to the Central Examinations Committee (CEC).
- Review course final results and submit its recommendation to CEC.
- Suggest additions and modifications pertaining to examination general policy
- Study external examiner reports and submit the necessary recommendation to CEC.

The Central Examination Committee (CEC)

This committee is chaired by Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. Its membership is as follows:
- Deans of Faculties
- Director of Admissions and Registration
- Director of Student Affairs
- Director of Examinations

Its major functions are to:
- Review Faculty Examination Committees' Recommendations concerning the appointment of external examiners, and submit its recommendation to the Academic Committee, the Academic Arm of the University Council.
- Supervise the operations of the Examination Department (ED), which reports to (CEC) in implementing examination-related tasks
- Review reports submitted by external examiners, and Faculty Examination Committees, and make the relevant and appropriate recommendation.
- Settle student appeals concerning course final grades not resolved by BECs and FECs. The decision taken by CEC shall be final and definitive.
- Draw up the University general framework and policy principles for examinations, and recommend their endorsement by the University Council or the Academic Committee as required and appropriate.
- Draw up a flow chart reflecting the functions, duties and responsibilities of the Examination Department and how they are discharged.
- Investigate conflicts and controversies arising from the implementation of examination criteria and procedures, and recommend appropriate solutions to the University Council or the Academic Committee as required.
- Study the recommendations of Faculty Councils concerning endorsing course final grades, and submit its recommendation to the Academic Committee.
- Prepare semester and annual examination-related reports, and submit them to the AOU Rector.

IV. AOU Policy on Plagiarism

As stipulated in AOU Examination By-laws (article 22), any student caught cheating and/or found to have committed an act of plagiarism shall be referred to the competent disciplinary committee, which shall take its decisions as per rules in effect

at AOU, which rules and procedures allow, among other things, dismissal from the University, and forfeiting the credit hours for the relevant course.

The following are considered acts of cheating and plagiarism:
- Copying printed material and submitting it as part of TMAs and examination scripts without acknowledgement and documentation.
- Copying material from the internet including tables and pictures.
- Copying other students' notes and or reports
- Using paid/unpaid material prepared for the student by individuals or institutions.

The regulations also stipulate that discovering cheating or plagiarism at any subsequent time does not absolve the student from bearing the relevant disciplinary consequences, which could include withdrawing the award he/she had received.

V. Job Specification of AOU Academic Staff

V.1. Branch Programme Coordinator

- Coordinating with the Branch Director concerning the study programme implementation and requirements
- Coordinating among the different course coordinators
- Planning and implementing Branch academic student advising and related matters.

V.2 General Course Coordinator

- Reviewing course material content and making sure it is in harmony with Arab and Islamic cultural and religious precepts, and heritage.
- Preparing TMAs and their answer notes.
- Preparing Final Examination Papers, their marking criteria, and answer notes.
- Preparing a website for the course comprising its structure, components, study calendar, assignment and marking booklet, tutor guide, and the e-mail addresses of Faculty members providing tuition for the course at all AOU Branches so that they can have a platform for exchanging ideas, experience, and expertise.
- Recommending quality assurance criteria with regard to course support, presentation, and evaluation.
- Participating in the Faculty Examination Committee meetings scheduled for reviewing the course and preparing all documents and data required by its external examiner.
- Preparing the course tutor guide, and the academic study calendar.
- Preparing any and all support material deemed necessary for the course.
- Preparing a complete file for the course, which shall be kept in the Faculty (FLS), and shall include all components of the course (printed material, audio and video material, course books, set books, and all relevant support material).
- Coordinating with the branches for preparing a course file (as in (9) above) to be kept in their Learning Resource Center.

- Monitoring and following up the progression of the course at the different AOU Branches in coordination with the branch course coordinator for making successful teaching/learning experiences and methodologies available to all branches.
- Supervising the preparation of the final examination(s) and sending it/them to the branches as per procedures and measures in effect at the University.
- Coordinating with the branch course coordinator in respect of providing the Dean with the required samples of marked TMAs, quizzes, final examination and/or project for University evaluation, quality assurance, and review by the external examiner. Correspondence with branch coordinators should be through the Branch Director.
- For each section a tutor or member of the academic staff teaches, he/she is required to provide the following:

  (3) Marked TMAs, (3) marked quizzes, and (3) marked final examination papers. If the course is given over two semesters, tutors are required to provide samples of both final examinations (i.e. at the end of the first semester, and the second semester). The (3) samples should represent three different performance standards, i.e. excellent, good, and poor. They should be couriered to the Dean immediately after marking. These samples are required from each tutor regardless his or her level of internal monitoring (A,B,C, or D) by the staff tutor (cf II.10)
- Performing both academic and administrative tasks assigned to Faculty members at the Headquarters or the Branch.

Please note that all correspondence with the competent branch authorities is done in consultation with The Dean, who shall be provided with copies of official outgoing, correspondence by the general course coordinator and incoming correspondence to him/her.

V.3. Branch Staff Tutor (Course Coordinator)

- Supervising tuition and presentation of relevant course material
- Supervising and monitoring TMAs and quizzes
- Participating in developing course content and presentation and providing the Faculty with feedback from all relevant parties
- Training tutors and making available to them all possible opportunities conducive to professional development
- Holding bi-weekly meetings with tutors
- Monitoring tutorials
- Monitoring tutor office hours
- Giving demonstration tutorials or mini-tutorials
- Holding training seminars for tutors
- Participating in relevant generic and specific training workshops
- Training tutors in monitoring and marking TMAs, quizzes, and final examinations
- Providing semi-annual and annual reports about tutor performance as well as tutor comments and suggestions concerning both content and presentation of the course material.
- Providing ongoing as well as semiannual and annual feedback reports about TMAs and examinations prepared by course chairs

V.4. *Tutor*

- Conducting tutorials with emphasis on student self-reliance
- Marking TMAs (bearing in mind that his/her comments are an integral part of the teaching-learning process)
- Providing additional tuition to students he/she thinks they need it.
- Participating in relevant workshops held at the Branch for staff specific and generic professional development
- Maintaining close contact with students and helping alleviate their problems and provide solutions to their academic needs (through e-mail, office hours, and other appropriate arrangements.)
- Marking quizzes and final examinations
- Keeping office hours
- Communicating clearly, consistently, and conscientiously with students
- Providing feedback on the overall progress of students in relation to agreed and expected course outcomes.
- Making effective use of feedback from students to enhance their own performance as tutors.

VI. Criteria for appointing external examiners

VI.1. *Appointment procedure*
- An external examiner is appointed by the Academic Committee (acting on behalf of the University Council) on the recommendation of the Faculty Council.
- As per the provision of the agreement between AOU and OU, the appointment decision needs to be endorsed by OUVS.
- An external examiner must be a qualified Faculty member holding the rank of associate professor, senior lecturer, professor, or the equivalent thereof.
- An external examiner is appointed for a minimum of two years and a maximum of four.
- An external examiner's appointment can be for one or more core programme courses.
- An external examiner shall not hold more than two analogous appointments at two other universities.
- An external examiner must have experience and expertise in distance education.
- A special form approved by AOU shall be used for nominating and recommending the appointment of external examiners.

VI.2. *Aims of appointing external examiners*
- To enable AOU to be aware of and benefit from the experience of other universities, and scientific/academic institutions in the area of evaluation standards and criteria of academic performance
- To play an effective role in implementing and developing quality assurance measures in effect at AOU.

VI.3. *Course Information and documentation required by external examiners:*

- Course level, title, and prerequisites
- Learning objectives, and performance indicators
- Course content and study calendar
- Tutoring hours and method of presentation
- Primary, support, and resource material
- Method and samples of assessment (cf II.10, and V.2 bullet 14)

VI.4. *Responsibilities of external examiners*
External examiners are responsible for:

- Participating in the deliberations of Faculty Council Examination Committees
- Reviewing and revising final examination scripts
- Reviewing and revising TMAs
- Submitting a report to the Chair of the Central Examination Committee in which he/she provides a summary of his/her ideas and comments on final examination papers, TMAs and assessment of both student and tutor performance. This includes sampling all marked assessments of AOU including quizzes and final examination papers. External examiners are required to use the OUVS External Examiner Report Form given in appendix I. External examiner reports shall be received no later than two months following the final meeting of the Examination Board at which awards are decided. (Section 4.2, p. 73 of this Handbook).

N.B. If an unresolved difference of opinion arises between the external examiners and the Faculty Examination Committee(s), it shall be referred to and settled by the Central Examination Committee

VI.5. *Processing External Examiner Reports*
The following steps are taken in the order indicated:

- The report is sent to the Head of the Institution, i.e. to the AOU Rector with a signed copy to UKOU Vice Chancellor c/o OUVS.
- The AOU Rector refers the report to the AOU Vice Rector for Academic Affairs (VRAA)
- The VRAA refers the report to the Dean of the Faculty for study and analysis by the Faculty Examination Committee (FEC)
- The FEC forwards its findings, suggestions, and recommendations to the VRAA.
- The VRAA studies the FEC's report, and refers it (with his comments and suggestions) to the Academic Committee (AC)
- The Academic Committee reviews the report and specifies the action to be taken.
- The external examiner is informed of the decisions of the AC, and later fully apprised of action taken by the relevant faculty.

VII. Remuneration of External Examiners

VII.1. Travel
Economy return tickets from the external examiner's place of residence to the AOU Headquarters.

VII.2. Per diems
   a. Perdiem remuneration will be as per UNESCO rates
   b. Full per diems will be paid for each working day spent at the AOU Headquarters (AOUH)
   c. Each day of travel to the AOUH and back to the external examiner's place of residence will count as half a day for purposes of per diem remuneration
   d. Perdiems paid to the external examiner cover hotel accommodation and food expenses.

VII.3. Other expenses
AOU will pay all fees required for securing a visa to Kuwait. Other expenses directly related to the external examiner's task will also be covered but with the prior approval of AOU.

VII.4. Total remuneration
   a. The external examiner will spend two working days at the AOUH for which he/she will receive the UNESCO rate perdiem for each day as stipulated in (VII.2).
   b. The external examiner will also receive £5 for each course credit unit, and an additional £100 for attending and participating in the deliberations of the Examination Committees.
   c. If the external examiner is appointed for two or more courses his/her remuneration will be as follows:
   - As stipulated in (VII.4.a) and (VII.4.b) above for the course with the greater number of points.
   - An additional £100 for the course with the smaller number of credit points provided that the total amount does not exceed £300 (for three courses)
   d. Working and travel days per diems and remuneration for attending the Examinations committee(s) meeting(s) will be paid upon the external examiner's arrival in Kuwait. The remaining sum will be paid on the receipt of his/her report.

VII.5. General provision
If there is a need for extending the external examiner's task to more than two working days, he/she will be entitled to a £91 per diem for each additional day.

VIII. Marking Criteria and Performance Indicators

AOU assigns to each course final result a numerical grade and a corresponding letter grade as follows:

Numerical grade on a 4-point scale	Letter grade
4	A
3.5	B+
3.0	B
2.5	C+
2.0	C
1.5	D
0.0	F

Semester and cumulative averages are given in numbers (on a four-point scale) and performance standards as follows:

Score	Performance standard
3.67-4.0	Excellent
3.0-3.66	Very good
2.33-2.99	Good
2.0-2.32	Pass
Less than 2	Weak/poor

Cumulative averages are computed by multiplying the final grade of each course by the number of credit hours assigned to it and then, adding up the totals for all relevant courses, and dividing the grand total by the total number of credit hours.

The standard deviation method is used for processing numerical course grades into letter grades as follows:

1. The mean (average) of course grades shall correspond to the letter grade (c). Whenever possible, the mean should be considered the lower end of band (c).

2. The standard deviation, once computed, shall be used in weighting the numerical grades that correspond to the remaining letter grades.

3. For arriving at the numerical grade of the letter grade B, for example, we use the following formula.
   Letter grade (B) = m + (b)SD

This means that the numerical grade is the total of the mean grade plus a reasonable percentage of the standard deviation. This percentage of SD is subject to personal judgment and could be (b=.5, .75, or 1.0). It should, however, ensure that a cluster is created for the conceived grade, above or below the C- grade.

4. The numerical grade corresponding to the letter grade D shall be computed as in item (3) but by using the standard deviation in a regressive manner, i.e. by subtracting the appropriate percentage of the standard deviation from the mean, i.e. (D) = m-(b) SD. (D) should, of course, fall between (C) and (F). As (D) is the passing grade, it requires special care and attention.

5. The numerical grade corresponding to the letter grade (A) shall be computed as per the following formula. For example:
   A = m+ (b) SD   where (b) could be (1.2, 1.5, or 1.6)

6. The numerical grade for the letter grade F is computed by subtraction as in item (4). (F) = m- (b) SD

7. The numerical grades corresponding to letter grades (C+) and (B+) should be computed as follows:
   (B+) = Between (A) and (B)
   (C+) = Between (B) and (C)

N.B. Letter grades should, as much as possible, be allocated ensuring the creation of clusters.

Marking system for courses offered by the Faculty of Language Studies

The following are examples of marking schemes for specific courses usually representing of the policy followed by the different AOU Faculties.

a. A210: Approaching Literature

The assessment for A210 consists of two components. The TMAs and quizzes make up the continuous assessment component and are weighted at 35% and 15% respectively. The two three-hour course examinations makes up the remaining 50% and is the examinable component. Your final course result will depend on your achievements in each component independently. In order to be sure of a pass on the course you need to score at least 50 per cent overall in the continuous assessment component, and, *separately*, at least 50 per cent in the examination.

The comments your tutor puts on your essays and on the PT3 forms will, we hope, help you to understand where your essays succeed or fall short as arguments responding to particular assignment tasks. This section is designed to try to help you understand in more general terms the marks you are given. We hope you will find it useful, not only in demystifying the whole marking process but in adjusting your way of working for future assignments. The points made below correspond with those issued to tutors in the guidance notes they receive.

A210 uses a numerical marking system. As is the case generally in the Arab Open University, we encourage tutors to use the full range of numbers. The following table indicates how A210 scores are characterized, and relates them to a letter grade – a system used by many universities.

Letter grade	Performance standard
A	Excellent/Pass 1
B, B+	Very Good/Pass 2
C, C+	Good/Pass 3
D	Pass/Pass 4
F	Fail

Deciding the mark

In marking work on A210, tutors are asked to look out for:

good knowledge of texts leading to argument based on sound evidence;

good presentation and scholarly method, making it possible for others easily to follow and engage with the argument and evidence;

good argument and response to the assignment question, demonstrating developing skills in written argument as well as clear understanding of the course;

clear engagement with the issues raised in the course, demonstrating that the student has carefully and thoroughly studied the course.

What the mark means

The following paragraphs describing the kind of work that will earn the different marks may help you to understand how your tutor rates your work, using four categories. In reading the description, remember that the quality of work in an essay might well not be even across the four categories. Your final mark might then reflect, for example, that you have done very well so far as argument and response to the assignment are concerned but not so well in presentation and scholarly methods (or vice versa). You will always need to read the PT3 form carefully to understand the mark for an individual assignment. If in doubt, please ask your tutor for further information.

'A' (excellent/pass 1)

Knowledge of texts: You made an excellent choice of texts and in discussion foregrounded their 'literary' qualities.

Presentation and scholarly methods: Argument and evidence were well woven together and you made consistent use of literary terms. You quoted accurately and provided good references and bibliography.

Argument and response to assignment: Your argument was well controlled and organized and addressed all parts of the topic. Perhaps you used your own insights to extend the argument beyond the terms of the set topic.

Understanding of the issues: You clearly understood the issues raised by the assignment and the relevant course material, including seeing why these are important in terms of literary study. Maybe you used your own material from beyond the course.

'B, B+' (very good/pass 2)

Knowledge of texts: You made a good choice of texts for discussion, and demonstrated knowledge of them in terms of content and their literary qualities through apt citation and quotation.

Presentation and scholarly methods: Your essay was made up of fluent sentences well organized into paragraphs. You probably made some use of literary terms and provided clear references.

Argument and response to assignment: The essay addressed the issues raised in the assignment thoroughly in a way that shows you clearly thinking for yourself. Your argument showed evidence of your having reflected on the topic.

Understanding of issues: You showed understanding of the issues raised by the course material, particularly in the way you were able to put things in your own words, but most probably you stayed within the bounds of the course material.

'C, C+' (good/pass 3)

Knowledge of texts: You made an acceptable choice of texts or examples for discussion and provided evidence of knowledge of the texts and the ability to analyse them in literary terms. You mostly used quotations in a way that showed you understand how they constitute evidence in the argument.

Presentation and scholarly methods: The essay was written in sentences and paragraphs that communicated your ideas but perhaps there was scope for improvement in your style. You did give serviceable references but maybe they were not all in a fully scholarly style.

Argument and response to assignment: The argument in the essay had a clear beginning, middle and end and you did address the main issues of the assignment. But maybe there were ways in which you could have carried the argument further to draw out more of the implications of the assignment.

Understanding of issues: Your essay showed signs of your having studied the course material and you tried to make some use of key words and concepts, but perhaps there were occasions when it looked as if you were not entirely sure about a meaning. Or possibly there were more things that could have been said to elaborate your points.

'D' (pass/pass 4)

Knowledge of texts: Your choice of the texts and examples was acceptable and showed you had read the set texts carefully and knew their content. At some points in the essay there was evidence that you were aware of the literary features of the set texts.

Presentation and scholarly methods: Your essay showed that you had taken care and tried to write in a comprehensible way; you had also taken care to spell words correctly although perhaps there were occasional lapses. There was evidence that you are aware you need to identify the sources of quotations, etc. but maybe references were not always complete or correct.

Argument and response to assignment: For at least some of the time you showed you understood what it was the assignment required you to do, but maybe there were patches where your focus on the issue slipped. Perhaps you tended to tell the story or forgot that you were dealing with an imagined literary text.

Understanding of issues: Again there were points in the essay that showed you had worked through the course material and were aware of the issues, but maybe there were things that you missed that it would have been good to bring in.

'F' (fail)

You need to get in touch with your tutor to work out a plan to help you improve if you are given a mark lower than 50.

Knowledge of texts: You did not show that you knew the set texts well enough. Maybe you only briefly referred to them, or there were signs that you had not fully understood what you were reading. You almost certainly needed to do more to demonstrate that you understand how to deal with the 'literary' dimension of the text.

Presentation and scholarly methods: Most probably you needed to do a good deal more work here. Maybe your writing style and spelling were poor, or you did not give evidence to support your points or sources for quotations. Perhaps you did not include a bibliography.

Argument and response to assignment: You did not really answer the question. It would be a good idea to check with your tutor before completing your next assignment to make sure what you write is going to be relevant.

Understanding of issues: It looked as if you were having real problems with the course work and that you did the assignment before you had fully understood the relevant chapter. Maybe you are short of time or working in an unfamiliar area and have not got to grips with the subject yet.

b. U210A & B: The English Language: past, present, and future

	Criteria Mark/Band	Relevance to question	Knowledge and understanding of course material	Approach to alternative explanations and arguments	Construction of argument	Clear expression and use of academic conventions	Approach to language data (where appropriate)
F	**Fail**	None or slight	Very little from course/fundamental misunderstandings	None or with no support from course	Slight	Expression and sentence structure needs attention/insufficient referencing	Slight
	Bare Fail	Some relevant material but failure to address question	Little appreciation of main idea or inadequate knowledge/insufficient reading	No evidence of critical thinking	Lack of organization	Deficiencies	Insufficient/not enough detailed discussion of data
D	**Satisfactory**	Some ability to identify main issues	Very basic understanding of course material/substantial omissions and/or misunderstandings	Lacking /heavily descriptive	Lines of arguments may be clear for short sections but not sustained or developed	Bare bones of structure/coherent expression/attempts at referencing	Analysis barely appropriate /related to course. Interpretations barely justified
C **C+**	**Good**	Clear evidence of understanding question and overall direction of answer	Effective drawing on evidence/ideas/concepts and arguments central to the course	Recognition and limited discussion of competing explanations for linguistic events/processes	Clear, sustained argument	Good structure/ expression/referencing	Analysis barely appropriate/ related to course. Interpretations justified

B **B+**	**Very Good**	Utilizes a wide range of relevant and contemporary material to produce a cogent and insightful argument	Comprehensive and judicious use of relevant literature	Good discussion of competing explanations and arguments	Assertions are made with evaluated evidence; all sections contributing	Very good structure, expression and ability to employ sources appropriately	Very good analysis. Judicious interpretations.
A	**Excellent**	Creative /original relevant stance	Excellent knowledge and understanding	Critical approach	Cohesive/and original/creative	Excellent structure, expression and use of evidence	Excellent analysis/ interpretations

*These marking criteria are informed by and mostly extracted from the UKOU U210A Assignment Booklet 2004 (p. 30). They are to be used as general guidelines for marking TMAs, tests, and the final examination as long as they do not violate criteria and marking standards set by AOU including the marking and grading system indicated on page 20 of the U210A Assignment Booklet 2003/2004. They are also subject to any changes AOU might deem necessary.

c. **E303: English Grammar in Context**

In all the E303 assignments, and in the examination, your work will assessed according to the seven generic marking criteria given on pages 7-8. The grid below links these seven criteria described to the specific learning outcomes presented in Appendix 1, as well as indicating in broad terms how they relate to each performance bad. The grid is for guidance only and should be interpreted in conjunction with the marking criteria on pages 7-8. It is regularly evaluated and amended by the course team in the light of student and tutor experience.

of	*1. Relevance to question set*	*2. Knowledge and understanding of course material*	*3. Skills of linguistic analysis and description*	*4. Critical interpretation and evaluation of linguistic evidence*	*5. Construction of academic argument*	*6. Clear expression and use of academic conventions*	*7. Skills of independent study*
Relationship to Learning Outcomes	Key Skills (a)-(b)	Knowledge and Understanding (a)-(c)	Cognitive skill (a)	Cognitive skills (b)-(c) Key skills (a)-(b), (h)-(i) Practical/ professional (b)-(c)	Cognitive skill d Key skills (a)-(c) Practical/ professional (e)	Key skills (d)-(e) Practical/ professional e	Cognitive skill (e) Key skills (f)-(g) Practical/ professional (a), (d), (f)
Pass 1 A Excellent	Sustained focus on the question; evidence of intellectual engagement with question	Excellent knowledge and understanding of course material, effectively deployed	Confident in exercise of all relevant linguistic skills	Critical approach to evidence	Well-structured and coherent argument; consistently well supported by evidence	Very clear expression; all sources of evidence appropriately acknowledged and referenced	High level of motivation; clear evidence of independent engagement with/application of ideas

Pass 2 B, B+ Very Good	Utilizes a wide range of relevant material to produce a cogent argument in answer to question	Good knowledge and understanding; judicious use of relevant course material	Competent in exercise of key linguistic skills	Good discussion of competing explanations for linguistic data	Assertions are well supported by evidence	Very good structure, expression and ability to employ source material appropriately	Evidence of independent engagement with ideas and good motivation to apply insights gained
Pass 3 C, C+ Good	Clear evidence of understanding question and clear overall direction of answer	Draws competently on the most relevant course material	Linguistic skills adequate for the task in hand	Recognition and some limited discussion of competing explanations for linguistic data	Clear, sustained argument	Good structure/expression/referencing	Some evidence of independent engagement with ideas; responsive to tutor feedback
Pass 4 Satisfactory	Able to identify and address main issues	Basic understanding of course material, but with some omissions and/or misunderstandings	Linguistic skills basic, with occasional deficiencies	Heavily descriptive, with very limited discussion of competing explanations for linguistic data	Lines of argument may be clear for short sections but not sustained or developed	Bare bones of structure/coherent expression/attempts at referencing	Some limited evidence of independent engagement with ideas, and response to tutor feedback
Bare fail	Some relevant material but fails to address question consistently or adequately	Weak understanding or inadequate knowledge of course material	Linguistic skills weak with frequent errors of analysis	Almost totally descriptive, with little evidence of critical thinking	Slight and/or poorly organised argument	Deficiencies in structure/expression/referencing	Weak evidence of independent engagement with ideas; poor response to tutor feedback

Fail	Wanders of topic and/or fails to understand purpose of question	Very little from course/fundamental misunderstandings	Virtually no evidence of linguistic skills	Virtually no evidence of critical thinking	Very weakly argued	Serious deficiencies in structure/expression/referencing	Little evidence of independent engagement with ideas, or response to tutor feedback
Bad fail	Mostly irrelevant to question	No, or very little, evidence of exposure to course materials	No evidence of linguistic skills	No evidence of any critical thinking	Little attempt at argument	Little written or not in full sentences; lack of overall coherence	No evidence of independent engagement with ideas; unresponsive to tutor feedback

Marking system for courses offered by the Faculty of Business Studies

Grade	Relevance to question	Knowledge and understanding of course material	Approach to alternative explanations and arguments	Construction of argument	Clear expression and use of academic conventions	Approach to language and data (where appropriate)
A (Excellent)	Demonstrates originality and critical thinking	Demonstrates solid knowledge and ability to apply it to management practice	Demonstrates logical criticism	Original, demonstrates creative thinking and coherence	Very well organized and based on evidence	Logical and complete interpretation and analysis
B+ B (Very good)	Polished and utilizes a wide range of relevant and contemporary material to produce a cogent and insightful argument	Comprehensive use of relevant body of knowledge	Objective discussion of competing explanations and arguments	Conclusions are drawn evaluated evidence, all sections contributing	Very good structure, expression and ability to employ sources appropriately	Very good analysis, judicious interpretations
C+ C (Good)	Clear evidence of understanding question and overall Direction of answer	Effective inferences from evidence/ideas/concepts and arguments central to the course	Recognition and limited discussion of competing explanations	Clear, sustained argument	Good structure/ expression/referencing	Analysis barely appropriate and related to course
D (Pass)	Key issues addressed implicitly	Not enough information	Shallow in argument	Lacking in maturity	Patchy, based on some references	Largely descriptive, lacking in analytical rigor
F (Fail)	Irrelevant, based on common sense only ,unacceptable	Very poor comprehension of material	Very poor explanation and argument	Demonstrating errors of judgment and understanding	Very poor, many errors, not based on references	Serious deficiencies

Marking system for courses offered by Information Technology
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Supplementary Material MG TMA 01
Technology: Level 2
Information and Communication Technologies: people and interactions
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T209
Marking Guide TMA 01

Question 1 (75 marks)
Resources

For the technology content in answers to this question, students are expected to use
• Module 1 materials and associated documents
• material in the Booklet T Technologies
• relevant documents in the Booklet D Documents
• up-to-date material about Wireless, WAP, mobile telephony, combination PDAs etc. on the Web

and their answers should show evidence that they have made use of all of these.

For the **reading skills** needed to study the materials for this question, students are *expected* to use Booklet C Communication Skills, Part 4 Reading Skills in Technology.

For the **writing skills** needed to answer this question, students are *expected* to use the guidance on writing skills in Booklet C Communication Skills, Part 4 Writing Skills in Technology.

Updating

Students are expected up-date themselves on the appropriate technologies, all of which move on rapidly in today's world. The Web is an ideal place for doing this. The press may also be a useful and generally available source of information. Note that this update should relate to the technologies and their appropriateness for the situation described in Background for the tutor marked assignment, they are not asked to wander into speculation about future trends.

Expected structure

Students can order the material in their 'section of a report' in many different ways. They could, for example, have a brief introduction and then go on to state the key tools, describing the underlying technology of each, listing the pros and cons of each, and drawing this into some sort of a conclusion and illustrating the way it could all work in the clinic.

Alternatively, after a brief introduction they could identify the key tasks where the health clinic may want to use technology, link these tasks with an appropriate tool before drawing some sort of a conclusion illustrating the way it could all work in the clinic.

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Others may adopt a question and answer format including an illustration of the way it could all work in the clinic.

This is not expected at this stage of the course to be a 'formal' report so accept any clear structure that works. The most important thing is that the elements must be present in some logical and coherent order. 'Issues' must be separated and the material properly introduced and rounded off. It should have a brief introduction, and it should not just end abruptly. Note, however, that they are told specifically not to present a report that just lists points. Students should respect this preference.

They are also expected to make a serious attempt to address the request 'that as well as explaining the key technologies, will paint a 'picture' of how all of it could fit in the day to day work of the clinic. He explained it as 'a sort of scenario for us to visualize'. They may chose to do this in different ways but note the word 'visualize' which encourages the expectation that they will provide some kind of visual representation/summary such as a diagram or some may even put various images or clipart together into a picture.

Expected content

Students are expected to present the material in their own words and in a way that is suited to their audience and purpose.

Introduction

Should 'set the scene' for this 'section of the report'.

Conclusion

Should draw the threads of 'this section of the report' together. And (if not done elsewhere in the report) provide the staff of the clinic with a clear picture of how the technology might work for them in their day -to -day setting.

If they use any acronyms they should say what each acronym stands for and any particular technology they mention should have a sentence or two saying briefly what each is.

Below are some suggestions for content.

This is a growing area and there is much that the student could include or chose to highlight in their report. Watch out for the temptation to recommend implementing mobile technologies for its own sake. It's very easy to get carried away with the latest whizzy technologies. Students are expected to show some common sense and bear in mind the relevance of the technology to the context at all times.

Note that students must write about this material in a way that is accessible to non-IT technical health professionals and others working on health care at the Clinic.

Recent developments

The situation will have moved on again by the time students' answer the TMA in November, but a quick look at the web in July 2002 revealed for example:

• The technologies behind mobile communications are having mixed success and there is a lot of 'jockeying' for position in the market.
e.g.
WAP has not been as successful as was hyped, it requires appropriate handsets

and often material downloads slowly is only really suitable for text and it cannot access existing HTML material - requires it to be rewritten in WML.

GPRS: is an enhancement of GSM technology, requires appropriate handsets material downloads more quickly but can handle text and pictures and access existing HTML material

UMTS is a digital technology designed to integrate voice and data, it will require appropriate handsets, it is designed to download more quickly and to handle text and pictures and other media seamlessly and is designed to access existing **HTML** material

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• There are deemed to be problems with handsets' small screens and poor navigation facilities but we are increasingly seeing 3G-style devices that mix PDA functions like POP3 or IMAP email and address books with built-in still or video cameras - and of course conventional voice telephony. A very large number of mobile phones now come with colour screens, limited internet browsing capability, good audio formats such as Midi and Wav, built-in cameras: they are referred to as 'smart phones'. Picture imaging via mobile phones is catching on fast

• The current preferred platform for combined devices (whether PDA with Internet and mobile phone facilities or mobile phone with Internet and PDA facilities) is becoming GSM with GPRS

Wi-Fi

• Wi-Fi itself is emerging as a significant technology for all computers especially notebooks and PDAs providing high-speed access to the web and between computer systems.

• There are still issues with WiFi but it is increasingly being used to create wiresfree work environments and aid communication between different devices.

• In a medical setting there may be issues around 'interference' with sensitive equipment.

PDAs

• Students may suggest a PDA with Internet access software used in combination with an infra-red link to a compatible mobile phone. This would allow dial-up access to a server at the clinic and could well be a good solution.

• Students may also mention that at present mobile terminals have small screens, a limitation which could well influence choices, though, new devices with high quality imaging are addressing this problem.

• Some enterprising students will discover that there are many projects that enable medical professionals to make best use of PDAs including add-on software like medical /symptom directories, pharmacy guides, patient record databases etc Laptops

• Laptops are increasingly popular for mobile computing and their specifications are now fully geared to mobile computing.

• The new generation of Tablet PCs are now appearing and are already being used by health and social welfare professionals in a number of different settings.

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Marking scheme for Question 1
Marks for content (50 marks)

The following is not meant to imply order, merely to indicate what should be included.

Start:

For good introduction to this section of the report	**5 marks**

Main Content:

For saying what it is and describing the underlying technologies	**30 marks***

Ending:

For suitable conclusion	**5 marks**
For visualising the technology in context of the scenario	**10 marks**
Deduct marks for the following problems:	**deductions**

For each instance of plagiarism (depending on severity) up to 3 marks

For no statement of word count	**2 marks**
For statement of word count but up to 100 words outside set limits	**1 mark**
For statement of word count but 100 or more words outside set limits	**2 marks**
For no reference* list given when one is needed	**2 marks**
For no bibliography* list (all cases)	**2 marks**

*At this stage of the course allow for the possibility that students are not clear about the difference and do not penalize them for this.

Do *not* penalize students if they do not give the items in their reference and/or bibliography lists in a conventional format. You could refer them to the Course Guide for help on this point. There will be more about this later in the course.

Students will have been told that the **following count towards their word count**: headings; sub-headings; table headings; figure captions; footnotes; quotations; appendices

and the following do not:

reference and bibliography lists; text on figures; text in tables unless tables are clearly being used to avoid the word limits instead of to convey information appropriately.

Total for content: 50 marks

Marks for structure (15 marks)

There are 15 marks for structure and 5 points to look out for (see Companion page 9):

• Does the document start and end effectively?
• Is the content presented in an appropriate order, with concerns separated?
• Are headings and sub-headings used appropriately?
• Are paragraphs well structured?

• If diagrams are used, are they well placed with respect to the accompanying text, with suitable cross-references in the text?

But if you notionally allow 3 marks per point it is all to easy to tend to find reasons to give 5×2 marks and end up with around 10 for nearly everyone! So please try to apply the following scheme:

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Excellent standard of work under all 5 points	**10 marks**
Generally good, with some excellent	**8 to 9 marks**
Good	**6 to 7 marks**
Generally good, with some fair	**5 marks**
Generally weak, with some fair	**4 to 3 marks**
Weak under all 5 points	**less than 3 marks**
	Total for structure: 10 marks

Marks for style and technical level (10 marks)

Under *style*, look out for points such as

• use of 'I' (unsuitable in a report like this one)
• use of 'you' and 'we' (may be occasionally acceptable)
• abbreviations such as 'it's' and 'there's' (unsuitable in a report like this one)
• use of passive (better not overdone as it can get very dry)
• level of general, non-technical vocabulary (should be suited to managers)
• sentence length and complexity (managers can be assumed to be able to cope with reasonably complex sentences)
etc.

Under *technical level*, look out for points such as

• use of technical terms (these should be explained, or else be ones that these managers could reasonably be expected to understand)
• density of technical terms (too high a density could be overwhelming – too low suggests that the report may be evading getting to grips with technical matters)
• overall expectation of technical background knowledge of the readers
• overall ability to convey all the technology necessary in a manner that can be understood
etc.

and award marks for **each** (style and technical) out of 5 as follows (not being afraid to award 5 marks if deserved):

Excellent	**5 marks**
Very good	**4 marks**
Good	**3 marks**
Fair	**2 marks**

Weak	**1 mark**
Dreadful	**0 marks**

Total for style and technical level: 10 marks

Marks for English (5 marks)

Look out for errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling plus infelicitous choice of vocabulary. Ones that 'trip the reader up' (by causing him/her to go back and re-read something in order to make sense of it) should be considered more severe errors than ones that don't. Remember, though, that this is a Level 2 course – and the first TMA in it. We should expect correct English, but professional standards are an unreasonable expectation at this stage of the course.

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Award marks as follows:

Excellent	**5 marks**
Very good	**4 marks**
Good	**3 marks**
Fair	**2 marks**
Weak	1 mark
Dreadful	0 marks

Total for English: 5 marks

Total for Question 1: 75 marks

Question 2 (15 marks)

The purpose of this question is to enable you to check whether your students are using the Web and how well they are searching for material. Web use will figure largely later in the course; this TMA is a small beginning. The feedback you give your students is therefore very important, as they will use it to enhance their Web skills.

Students are asked for an account of their search strategy.

In marking this answer, you will need to cross-refer to the sites the student found in

Question 1 (as indicated in the bibliography, and references if any), and tailor both your marks and your feedback to fit. Note that students should focus on their search for material beyond the T209 course material, in particular recent material.

The question relates to two separate skills:

• their searching successes and problems
• the assessment of the usefulness and reliability of the material.

You should comment on their knowledge and skills in use of search engines/ directories. Are they using broad subject search, do they read the instructions for the

search engine, how do they narrow their searches? Do they use phrases enclosed in inverted commas rather than single word? Do they use domain names to determine the source of sites; are their criteria for deciding reliability and usefulness appropriate?

Allocate marks for these two skills as follows:

Indication of very high degree of expertise in this skill 15 marks

Good expertise   **11 to 13 marks**

Fair expertise   **10 to 7 marks**

Rather weak, needs a lot of advice and guidance   **6 or less marks**

No attempt to do this   **0 marks**

<div align="right">

Total for Question 2: 15 marks

</div>

Question 3 (10 marks)

The purpose of this question is to support the 'learning to learn' strand of the course that has been launched in the Learning section of the Journal. It is quite possible for a student to do well here even though s/he has done badly in Question 1, or vice versa. We are looking for the student's self-awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses and a willingness to work to improve a weakness. Your comments are important here, (1) because it is extremely discouraging to a student to 'open up' (which is often a challenge in itself) only to receive no comment, or a non-committal comment, from the tutor, and (2) because students are asked to comment later on how they have
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worked / are working to overcome issues they mention here. So please take this opportunity to engage in a dialogue with each of your students and so help them in the reflective component of 'learning to learn'.

In commenting try to correlate what the student says to be their skills or development needs with the student's work in the rest of the TMA and, if necessary, point out the evidence suggests that an alleged skill or development need isn't really one and/or suggest an alternative skill or need that strikes you as particularly obvious (this needs handling with much tact, but could be very useful feedback to the student).

Students are expected to write a reasonable short paragraph for each part. If they just 'list' or briefly state a skill without further explanation they would probably only get 1 mark for each section instead of 2 marks.

Mark as follows:

(a)   (i) valid skill in learning about technology

                                                                                                              2 marks

(ii)   valid skill in communicating technology

                                                                                                              2 marks

<div align="right">

Total for part (a): 4 marks

</div>

(b)   (i) valid area to further develop the skills needed to learn about technology

                                                                                                              2 marks

            (ii) valid weakness in communicating technology as evidenced from the

<div align="center">

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</div>

rest of the TMA **2 marks**

Total for part (b): 4 marks

(c)   Sensible statement of intentions to improving 2 marks

Total for part (c): 2 marks

(No attempt to do this question **0 marks**)

**Total for Question 3:
10 marks**

You may wish to make a note of your comments on part (c), to help you when you
come to mark future TMAs and assess progress throughout the course.

IX. Quality Assurance

I. INTRODUCTION*

The Arab Open University (AOU) is launching a comprehensive programme of quality assurance, which manifests its commitment to quality education. A Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has been formed for this purpose. When fully implemented, the assessment programme will be an ongoing process of reviewing performance and achievement of goals across the range of all AOU's functions. Assessment information regarding the achievement of goals will be incorporated into existing decision making parameters within the AOU to serve as the basis for the strengthening of its institutional programmes and performance.

The AOU's quality assurance assessment programme is a commitment to evaluate institutional effectiveness throughout the tutoring and learning process and the environment, which supports it. All aspects of institutional performance will receive their share of assessment with particular attention directed to the assessment of student learning and academic achievement.

As part of the institutional quality system, a process of continuous quality improvement will be implemented. As assigned by the AOU's University Council, the QAC will establish and document its policy and strategy for defining, maintaining and improving the quality of education provided. The AOU's administration will ensure that this policy is understood and implemented at all levels in the institution.

1.1 Definitions:

The essential responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Committee are:
AOU's Quality Policy: The overall quality intentions and direction of the AOU with regard to quality, as formally expressed by its charter and the directives of the University Council and University Administration.
AOU's Quality System: the plans and procedures by means of which the Quality Assurance Committee intends to fulfill the AOU's quality policy.
Quality Assurance: All those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate assurance that the education services offered by the AOU will satisfy both local and international quality indicator standards stipulated in the mission statement of AOU.

* As provided by the office of the Vice Rector for Research, Planning, and Development

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The AOU's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is a university level committee reporting directly and exclusively to the University Council (UC). The QAC is chaired by the Vice Rector for Research, Planning and Development. While the UC has the authority to act, the QAC does the detailed work that leads to the assurance of quality. The QAC is required to create a quality assurance system within the AOU.

The QAC's long-term goal is to help assure the efficiency and success of the AOU. It does this through objective assurance designed to improve the AOU's operations. It helps the AOU accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its processes. For each area, appropriate mechanisms for quality assurance of the relevant activities are proposed, based on the agreed aims and objectives. The documentation of these mechanisms in the form of quality plans and procedures provides guidance for Faculties and staff on routine matters, to allow consistent and appropriate decisions to be made as issues arise.

The QAC bases its activities on a number of prerequisites, namely,:

1. the commitment and motivation of all staff towards meeting the needs of the AOU,
2. the empowerment of AOU's staff to the improvement of quality, and
3. the development of staff abilities by training, leading to a process of continuous and never-ending quality improvement.

2.1 AOU's Institutional Quality Policy

The QAC provides objective reviews of the AOU's faculties and processes. The committee works with all employees on quality matters, where it may delegate institutional quality policy to the Faculties and support services, and receives the reports, the regular reviews and audits carried out in these functions, which are then assessed at the institutional level. The Faculties, in a similar manner, generate aims and objectives for each programme of study, and receive regular review and audit reports. Each level of the quality system uses the review and audit reports from lower levels to inform its own review process. The overall objective of the QAC is to assist members of the AOU's management in the effective conduct of their responsibilities by providing them with objective analyses, appraisals, recommendations, and pertinent comments concerning activities reviewed. Any service or operation in the AOU should be subjected to a regular review to establish that it is operating at an appropriate level of quality and resource efficiency.

The procedural steps which lead to the fulfillment of the above undertaking by the QAC are the following:

1. Setting of quality objectives
2. Planning activities to meet these objectives,
3. Laying out the standards
4. Collection of data on the quality of performance,

5. Review assessment of how effectively the activities were performed.
6. Documentation of the quality plans,
7. Identification and correction of any deficiencies.

2.2 Duties and Responsibilities

The main tasks entrusted to the QAC are:

1. To establish and administer a coordinated, university-wide programme for quality improvement in support of tutoring, research, and student services
2. To examine the quality of the student learning experience and student achievement within the context set by the AOU's mission and the programmes' aims and objectives
3. To provide support, consultation and facilitation for expanding standards of excellence and creating a service-oriented culture
4. To serve in developing, applying, and evaluating organizational quality improvement frameworks, principles, and practices
5. To determine the needs of the students to be served.
6. To determine what graduates of the programme should know and be able to accomplish.
7. To seek different assessment measures to determine whether students meet the desired outcomes.
8. To examine how information from these assessments may be used to influence decision making and to continually improve the programme.
9. To review the Quality System itself periodically.
10. To apply the AOU's codes of practice in relation to the AOU's academic standard procedures.
11. To monitor the effective implementation of evaluation procedures at course and programme levels within each Faculty by several means.
12. To report periodically to the University Council on the progress of academic standards and to make recommendations on amendments to procedures and/or policy where appropriate.
13. To liaise with other AOU committees and bodies (such as and particularly the Student Affairs Committee and Examinations Committees) on issues of mutual concern arising from the academic standards process.

2.3 Committee Formation

The Quality assurance committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research, Planning, and Development, and its membership is as follows:

o Two Deans, on rotation basis and appointed by the Rector
o One Branch director, on rotation basis and appointed by the Rector
o Director of the Quality Assurance Department, who acts as the Committee's Secretary
o Director of the Human Resources Department
o Director of the Educational Materials Department

2.4 Mode of Operation

- o The QAC convenes on a regular basis. For the first year of operation the Committee will convene on a bi-monthly basis.
- o Prior to its regular meeting, the QAC receives a "Progress Report" prepared by the Director of the Quality Assurance Department, who also acts as the Committee's Secretary. The progress report is endorsed by the Committee Chair before being circulated to the Committee members.
- o The QAC submits its reports, in which its decisions and recommendations are included, to the Rector.
- o The Rector presents the QAC decisions and recommendations to the University Council –in its following meeting- for endorsement.

2.4 Partnership

As a part of the planning and development process, international partnerships will be formed between the AOU –represented by its QA system- and internationally respected organizations in the area of organizational quality, which have extensive knowledge and experience in applying the quality approach, e.g. the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), UK, and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Netherlands. This partnership aims to support the AOU in its quality initiative, and may be developed to encompass the following activities:

- Information sharing
- Organization-to-organization dialogue
- Strategy and staff development
- Support for staff development
- Introduction of new information technologies and strategies
- Education in quality concepts and practices
- Collaborative tutoring and research
- Joint service to the community, and the Arab World.

In the sections that follow the features of a work plan are outlined. The main parameters that influence education quality at the AOU are identified. This is followed by an account of the QAC's policy towards the setting of standards for those parameters. A complex of quality performance indicators is developed, which constitutes a practical, yet comprehensive, means of assessing quality at the AOU. The different mechanisms that the QAC proposes to use in the acquisition of the data necessary to develop the above indicators are described.

III. COMPONENTS OF QUALITY AT THE AOU

The main components of the educational process at the AOU are identified. The mandate given by the University Council to the QAC to ensure quality at the AOU accounts for all these components, where the standards for each component are set and ways of monitoring their status are devised.

1- Students:
- **Admissions:** policies appropriate to the AOU mission, which will have a major impact on the quality of education..
- **Student Learning Experience**.
- **Student Progress, Assessment and Achievement**.
- **Employability and/or Progression to Further studies**

2- Programmes

3- Quality of Tutoring and Delivery.

4- Staff and Staff Development.

5- Support Services. including libraries and student counseling.

6- Administrative Services: including such functions as registration and personnel functions.

7- Physical Resources: including computer laboratories, classrooms,.etc.

8- Academic Management and Quality Control.

9- Records: whose collection and maintenance are vital to the effectiveness of the institution's functions.

IV. SETTING THE STANDARDS

While the AOU's QAC realizes the fact that there is no single accepted definition of "quality", it maintains that the concept of consistency and fairness is central to the operation of a good QA system. Setting standards is a primary goal for the QAC where it recognizes that national, regional and international calibration is the primary standard for awards. Some areas directly reflect the AOU's performance and, thus, setting their standards becomes a primary task for the QAC.

The following sections describe the constituents of those standards. Every constituent is to be subjected to periodic monitoring and evaluation by the faculty or department in charge. Standards are identified by "Roman Numbering".

4.1 Student Quality Standards

Students represent one of the primary reflections of the AOU quality. This quality comes both from the initial scores of the entering class and from the performance of students after they leave the university. The set of standards which ensures students quality is divided into two categories: input-driven standards, i.e., concerning admissions, and output-driven standards, i.e., those relating to student performance and achievement.

4.1.1 Student Recruitment

A. No advertising and promotional material gives a false, misleading, or exaggerated impression of the AOU, its personnel, its awards, and the objectives and outcomes of those awards.

B. Wherever possible, all publicity material:

o clearly identifies the AOU.

o indicates that the education or training on offer is by open and/or distance methods.

o avoids any impression that employment is on offer or is in any way guaranteed.

C. The AOU takes full responsibility for the actions, statements, and conduct of its promotion personnel. Staff engaged in promotion are fully briefed in and adhere to the admissions policy of the AOU. Staff engaged in promotion do not offer educational advice unless competent to do so.

D. Any published schedules of fees clearly state:

1. what services are covered by those fees;
2. what additional payments, if any, may be necessary to achieve the course outcome;
3. what period those fees are valid for;
4. the circumstances under which full or partial refunds, or transfers to other courses, are possible.

E. All enquiries from potential students are handled promptly and carefully.

F. All direct communication with potential students aims to give them the best possible basis for choosing their courses to match their needs and qualifications.

4.1.2 Admissions

A. Prior to enrolment on a particular course, the prospective student is made properly aware of all terms and conditions relevant to that course, either in the student guide or similar material or in discussion with the AOU. These would normally include:

1. the full extent of the course;
2. the number of study hours necessary for its completion;
3. the overall time span between enrolment and completion;
4. the timetable for the provision of materials .
5. the total fee payable to the AOU in respect of the course;
6. the likely total costs to the student, including as well as AOU fees, the costs of necessary support materials,
7. the schedule of payment of fees (whether all at once or in stages);
8. the AOU's policy on refunds;
9. the availability and extent of learning, tutorial and any other advisory support;
10. the means of delivery of materials and support (fax, e-mail, or on-line);
11. any equipment (PC, VCR.. etc) needed by the student to study the course at home;
12. the timing and extent of the face-to-face component of the course;
13. the stated objective of the course, and its intended outcome;
14. any qualifications required of the student to undertake the course;
15. the level of recognition (national or international) of the award offered by the AOU as the outcome of the course.

B. The student is made aware of his or her responsibility to assess their own needs and capabilities before embarking upon a course, and is offered an opportunity to discuss these matters with the AOU staff prior to enrolment. Such issues may include:

1. whether the student has the necessary levels of competence to gain full benefit from the course. These competences might include literacy, fluency in English, and computer literacy;
2. whether the student's own objectives can be realized through that particular course;
3. any special needs of the student.

C. There is a learning agreement between the AOU and the student which specifies:

1. the nature and scope of the course;
2. the mutually-agreed anticipated outcome of the course;
3. the services to which the AOU is committed;
4. the rights, obligations and commitments expected of the student;
5. the financial agreement between the student and the AOU;
6. any allowance for special needs.

D. The student is made aware that this agreement may be legally enforceable.

1.1.3 Learning Performance
A. student academic progress and learning competencies are examined regularly.
B. student achievement of programme goals and objectives is tested.
C. student satisfaction is determined with academic and support services, curriculum, faculty and personnel.
D. information is provided to enhance academic and student service programme design, development and management.
E. results of the assessment information collection, feedback and integration process are evaluated.
F. student cohorts are tracked during their enrollment at AOU.
G. an early warning system of student difficulties is provided.
H. assessment data are integrated into profiles of individual students.
I. feedback is provided to the AOU University Council and administration to improve student learning and performance, and to improve programmes, programme planning and programme development.

Student readiness may be based on multiple indicators including past academic performance, educational readiness, educational goals, study skills, self concepts and motivation. A wide range of tools can be utilized to measure student quality, namely:
1. Standardized tests.
2. Evaluation of instructional delivery.
3. Analyses of projects and portfolios.
4. Completion rates.
5. Results of admission tests for students graduating from the AOU and applying to graduate or professional schools

6. Job placement rates.
7. Results of licensing examinations.
8. Evaluation by employers.
9. Follow-up studies of alumni.
10. Performances of student transfers at receiving institutions, etc.

4.1.4. Student Services

A. Student records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up to date. Records should include, amongst other information, details of all payments received and/or refunds made, details of any special agreements on learning outcomes between the AOU and the student, and information on student progress such as records of all tutor-marked assignments. Records should be maintained in a secure place, for as long as they are likely to be needed.

B. Students' concerns about the confidentiality of their records are respected.
C. Appropriate administrative and academic advice and guidance is available to all students
D. The AOU has adequate procedures to handle any difficulties which may arise between the student and the tutors, and students are made fully aware of all the avenues open to them to resolve those difficulties.
E. Career counseling and placement services are offered.
F. The AOU shows, through questionnaires or other means, that:

1. a high proportion of students are satisfied with the training or educational service provided.
2. appropriate retention and completion rates are achieved.

4.2. Academic Programmes

Programme quality policy is delegated to the Faculties. The quality assurance committee receives the reports, the regular reviews and audits carried out in these functions, which are then assessed at the institutional level. The Faculties, generate aims and objectives for each programme of study, and receive regular review and audit reports. The QAC perceives the fulfillment of educational goals and programme objectives to be based on two main quality aspects, namely, "curricular quality" and "tutoring and delivery quality".

4.2.1 Objectives, Management, and Outcome
A. Each course includes a clear statement of what the student can hope to achieve on successful completion of the course.
B. Outcomes are attainable through open and/or distance study, and complemented by face-to-face tutorials. Outcomes are specified in terms of the development of specific skills, the provision of job-related training, or the delivery of information.
C. Course objectives are clearly specified in the agreement between the AOU and the student.

D. Any assessments, including examinations, set by the AOU during or on completion of a course are adequate to ensure a proper assessment of the student's ability and achievements to date. Examinations should be properly marked or assessed, with procedures for ensuring security in their setting and assessment, monitoring the quality of those assessments, and providing appropriate feed back to the student. Students should be made aware of the procedure whereby assessments can be challenged.

E. Where appropriate, assessment is linked to accreditation by qualification-awarding bodies in AOU branch countries.

F. Any award offered by the AOU on completion of a programme clearly indicates the nature of the achievement recognized ,e.g., course completion, and other appropriate details of the awarding body.

G. The criteria by which "course completion" is assessed are made known to the student prior to enrolment.

H. The existence of any other award offered as an outcome by an external organization (currently, for example, the UKOU) is made clear by the AOU

4.2.2 Course Contents

A. Course contents are sufficient to achieve the course's stated objectives.

B. Course materials are prepared in view of the needs and background of students.

C. The AOU takes all reasonable steps to ensure that course materials do not contain significant errors of fact, misleading or out-of-date information, concepts or approaches. Also, all material agrees with the culture, beliefs and traditions of individual branch countries and the Arab world.

D. Course materials are reviewed within specified time periods to ensure they remain effective and up-to-date

E. Course materials are complemented whenever required by additional support material.

F. Course materials are structured to facilitate individual study and the development of study skills.

G. Typical features of good quality self-study course materials include:
  1. Appropriateness to the overall purpose of the course.
  2. Ability to deliver the declared outcome of the course.
  3. An appropriate and well-managed presentation.
  4. Careful pacing.
  5. Subdivision into appropriate units, lessons or modules.
  6. An indication of the time a student of average ability might expect to spend on each unit.
  7. A sequential exposition, with new material building on previous material.
  8. The use of a variety of approaches, including summaries, visual material, and illustrative examples as appropriate, to illuminate particular concepts.
  9. Regular opportunities for self-assessment.
  10. The inclusion of clear instructions to guide the student through the material.
  11. Provision in an attractively presented and convenient-to-use format.

H. The use of language in course materials is appropriate to the intended students. Whenever possible, some support in Arabic may be offered to students in courses written and delivered in English.

I. A clear outline of the course as a whole is provided with the first set of materials.

J. If materials other than those supplied by the AOU are required, clear information as to where to obtain those materials is given along with their probable cost. Reference is made to the material available in the AOU's Learning Resources Halls.

K. Any technologies used are particularly effective either to the curriculum or to the needs of the student.

L. If a new course is introduced, or significant amounts of new material are introduced into an existing course, the effectiveness of such material should be properly assessed in advance.

M. Face-to-face tutorial sessions are instrumental to the learning process, and are therefore compulsory.

N. Hands-on training is provided wherever it is a necessary component in achieving the stated outcome of the course.

O. The presence of tutorial sessions and hands-on training is made clear to the student prior to enrolment, along with any attendance, residential or financial implications of such provision.

4.2.3 Delivery and Learning Support

Every Faculty assesses and assures the quality of the tutoring and learning which it provides and should be fully aware of its tutoring strengths and weaknesses. The University Council policy makes it clear that evaluation should become a normal procedure, not confined to making judgments for probation and promotion.

The evaluation of tutoring should not be confined to the evaluation of performance in tutorials but should include evaluation of the contribution to course design, and the one-to-one help given to students. A tutoring portfolio is proposed by the QAC as an aid to tutoring evaluation. The portfolio is drawn up and maintained by the staff tutor, and reflects the following elements of quality.

A. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

B. The provision of study materials to students is prompt and timely.

C. Guidance on study skills is provided for all students.

D. If a significant element of the provision is technology-based, the AOU ensures that the student understands the system requirements.

E. Tutorial support is normally integral to all provision.

F. Tutorial support offered is of sufficient quality to meet the reasonable needs of students.

G. Access to tutors is on a sufficient, regular and, wherever possible, individual and flexible basis, which is known to both tutors and students.

H. Appropriate schedules for the submission and return of tutorial assignments are adopted and communicated to students.

I. All enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically by a person competent to do so.

J. The AOU carefully investigates cases of withdrawal.

K. Student progress is monitored on a regular, on-going basis, and students are provided with prompt, helpful and encouraging comments on their progress in relation to learning expectations and goals.   In particular:

1. Early contact with a student is initiated by tutors whenever difficulties occur arising from the non-submission of assignments by the appropriate deadline, or the submission of unsatisfactory work.
2. Care is taken to support and encourage students who submit unsatisfactory work; learning support is only withdrawn after all reasonable efforts have been made to overcome their problems.
3. If the AOU has significant doubts that the student is ready to undertake a particular examination or piece of practical work, the student is advised of those doubts.

L. Learning Resource Halls holding supplementary materials are made available.
M. Peer group interaction is encouraged and facilitated wherever possible through newsletters, new technologies or other means.

4.3 Staff

Setting standards for the quality of staff is a difficult but essential task.   Three standards are pursued by the QAC to ensure quality of the academic staff at the AOU.

4.3.1 Staff Recruitment
The quality of education is greatly affected by the performance of all staff employed by an institution. Staff and tutor recruitment procedures are included in the quality assurance system of the AOU. Established procedures are set to ensure that candidates may be equitably assessed to determine whether their abilities, experience and qualifications meet the needs of the vacant post, and that staff selection is carried out on the basis of the most appropriate criteria.
The QAC standard ensures that the duties and the required competencies for each post are clearly stipulated. Part-time tutors will also have an effect on the quality of a programme of study, and they should also be the subject of a formal recruitment process. An audit of staff recruitment procedures forms a part of the regular quality review process.

4.3.2 Tutor Responsibility

Tutors will:

1. have a sound understanding and up-to-date knowledge of their subject;
2. know how students learn, and help their students to learn how to learn;
3. communicate enthusiasm for the subject, and for learning, to their students;
4. show sensitivity to individual differences in ability and learning styles;
5. understand the special requirements of open and distance learning;
6. communicate clearly, consistently, conscientiously, constructively and quickly with their students;
7. encourage their students at all times;
8. provide feedback on overall progress in relation to the agreed outcome of the course;

9. make effective use of feedback from students to enhance their own performance as tutors.

4.3.3 Review and Development

Staff and tutor review and development is a key area for the improvement of the quality of education. Although it is possible to gain much expertise through successful experience, whether in tutoring, administration, support services or in management, there are normally other recognized methods and techniques which have been established elsewhere and which may not emerge through experience. Thus staff development, at all levels and in all fields, should include:

A. Staff is given opportunities to exchange successful personal experiences,

B. Training is provided in new or established methods given by those whose job it is to keep abreast of such developments.

4.3.4 Research

One acceptable standard for the quality of staff is research. Research represents one of the AOU's important prospective products. Students also should participate directly in research as part of their programme of education, working independently or in groups or projects with staff tutors and tutors. The standards on research at the AOU include the following aspects:

1. Policies and practices are set to facilitate research activity.
2. Faculty-based programmes are developed to support research by academic staff.
3. Facilities (labs, computers,..), resources, and support staff are provided to support research.

Two documents outlining the AOU's policies on Human Resource Development and Research are produced separately.

4.4 Learning Centers Resources

A. The open learning centre identifies the groups of users for whom it is intended.

B. The use made of an open learning centre is monitored on an ongoing basis to see if this identified group of users changes over time.

C. The resources provided are sufficient to meet the needs of its identified users. Such resources include:

1. clear and comprehensive catalogues of what is available;
2. relevant courseware, books and other printed materials;
3. Tapes, videos, computer work-stations, CD ROMs and on-line access;
4. learning support;
5. indications of appropriate links to other learning opportunities.

D. The resources are regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of users.

E. The access and facilities provided at the centre are suitable for its users. The centre will, as far as possible:

1. provide suitable facilities for individual study;
2. be conveniently located for easy access by users, and by staff;
3. be open to users at clearly specified and appropriate times (which take into account any special needs of its users);
4. have a person (a "Centre Manager") who has overall responsibility for running the centre.

F. Students are supported by suitably qualified staff at all times it is open.

G. Any booking conditions relating to personnel or equipment are clearly set out and made known to all users. .

H. Classrooms are optimally filled. Classroom utilization represents an aspect of the efficiency of the AOU in using every seat physically available to tutorial classes.

4.5 Academic Governance

A. The AOU demonstrates a high commitment to educational values. This should be evident in any mission statement, corporate objectives, or strategic goals the AOU adopts, and its actions should at all times be compatible with those values.

B. The AOU is committed to the continuous professional development of its staff and tutors.

C. The AOU is financially responsible and can meet its obligations to students.

D. The AOU's financial resources should afford all enrolled students a reasonable prospect of completing their studies. It should also have adequate insurance to cover its liabilities and responsibilities to students and third parties, and appropriate contingency and disaster recovery plans.

E. The AOU adopts widely accepted norms of good business and employment practice. For example, the AOU:

1. has a clear, fair and effective procedure for dealing with complaints;
2. has a clear, fair and effective policy on refunds, which is made clear to the student prior to enrolment
3. has reviewed its use and storage of data ;
4. has reviewed its use of copyright material ;
5. does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, or religious or political belief.
6. has adequate premises, space and equipment to conduct its business.

F. The AOU ensures adherence to all relevant legal requirements in branch countries.

G. All staff are suitable for the positions they hold, and possess appropriate qualifications and experience.

H. All tutor support is of high quality. Steps are taken to ensure that support is consistent for all tutors. Such measures may include:

1. the development of standard schemes for marking and assessment;
2. guidance notes for tutors;
3. regular meetings of tutors;
4. newsletters or other ways of sharing good practice, problems and solutions;
5. ongoing monitoring and review of tutors work, including sampling of tutor marking and comments;
6. an appraisal system for tutors;
7. guidance for new tutors in the special requirements of open and distance learning.
8. providing adequate administrative backup for tutors.

I. Sufficient resources are available to ensure that every student receives an adequate individual service.

J. The AOU adheres to all higher education standards in branch countries, and seeks, wherever possible, to strengthen those standards in ways appropriate to its particular programmes. The AOU has its own internal systems for monitoring performance against those standards. Such systems and standards may, for example:

1. identify and select suitable tutors;
2. monitor and review the continuing competence of all staff on a regular basis;
3. set time limits for responding to external approaches, marking and returning assignments to students, or reviewing course materials
4. seek and encourage feedback from tutors, staff, students and other customers on evaluating and improving materials and services;
5. measure outcomes, and use those measurements to enhance education.

K. A system using up-to-date information technology is established, a clear example of which is a comprehensive *Student Information System* (SIS). Adequate records are considered vital to the effectiveness of the AOU's functions and are therefore properly maintained. The implementation of a quality assurance system requires the establishment of a system for the identification, collection, indexing, storage, maintenance and disposition of all records relating quality.

4.6 External Examiners

The AOU considers the external examiner system to be one of the most important ways of ensuring that the programmes the AOU is running are academically sound, that the students are acquiring the correct level of learning and that programmes and results are comparable to those in similar higher education institutions, particularly open learning institutions. External Examiners, therefore, play an essential part in the quality assurance of a university. They are fundamental to maintaining academic

standards nationally across subjects. The University is expected to demonstrate that external examiners' reports are considered at the highest level and when necessary that appropriate action is taken to address any issues raised. Accordingly the University has developed a system which ensures that such reports are considered and addressed comprehensively across the university.

X. Role of external examiners

Regulations relating to external examiners

1   The rights and responsibilities of external examiners

1.1   The role of external examiners approved by the University for a validated programme is to ensure that justice is done to the individual student and that the standard of the University's validated awards is maintained.

1.2   In order to carry out these responsibilities, external examiners must:

1.2.1   be able to judge students impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment without being influenced by previous association with the programme, the staff or any of the students;

1.2.2   be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers undertaking comparable programmes of higher education elsewhere and in the light of subject benchmarks and qualification descriptors, as appropriate;

1.2.3   approve the form and content of proposed examination papers, coursework and other assessments that count towards the award (including alternative assessments and adjustments made for disabled students), in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme syllabus and regulations and in such a way that external examiners will be able to judge whether they have fulfilled the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard;

1.2.4   be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the approved assessment regulations which will directly affect students currently on programme;

1.2.5   attend examiners' meetings and have access to all assessed work;

1.2.6   see samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is parity of assessment across the cohort;

1.2.7   have the right to moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners where this is within the regulations for the programme and does not bias the overall assessment or cause unfairness to individual candidates.

1.2.8   have the right to meet students and, where appropriate, conduct viva voce examination of any candidate;

1.2.9   ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved programme regulations.

1.2.10   attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which decisions on recommendations for award are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached by means in accordance with the University's requirements and normal practice in higher education;

1.2.11   participate as required in any review of decisions about individual students' awards taken during the examiner's period of office;

1.2.12   report back to the institution on student performance and academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them (see external examiners' reports, below):

1.2.13   report to the University on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the standard of the University's validated award.

1.3   To carry out these responsibilities the external examiners must be:

1.3.1   competent in assessing students' knowledge and skills at higher education level;

1.3.2   expert in the field of study concerned;

1.3.3   impartial in judgment;

1.3.4   properly briefed about their role, the programme, and the University's requirements for validated awards.

1.4   Recommendations to the University for the conferment of an award will not be valid without the written endorsement of the external examiners.

2   The appointment of external examiners

2.1   All external examiner nominations must be approved by OUVS prior to the appointment being made by the Academic Board of the institution.

2.2   OUVS will organize the appraisal of external examiner nominations, unless an Institution has delegated authority for this.

2.3   When submitting a nomination to OUVS, institutions should ensure that this arrives at least six months before the examiner is expected to take up his or her duties. A nomination should be made on the appropriate application form and include the nominee's curriculum vitae. For institutions with delegated authority, OUVS requires evidence that the nomination has been appraised by three independent appraisers.

2.4   A Board of Examiners which does not include approved external examiners is not authorized to assess students for an award or to recommend the conferment of an award upon a student. External examiners should participate in assessment for progression form one stage of the programme to the next.

2.5   New examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors. External examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in order to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions.

2.6   Normally, where assessments take place in the summer term, appointments will run from the January before the first assessments to the December after the last assessments. The examiner's normal term of office will be one which allows the examiner to assess four successive cohorts of students; this will mean four calendar years but may be longer where, for example, continuous assessment is involved from an early stage or, in the case of new programmes, where the first output will not occur in the first year of appointment.

2.7   External examiners should not hold more than the equivalent of two substantial undergraduate appointments at the same time. This guideline should be used in considering nominations and convincing arguments in support of proposals for a heavier workload for an examiner will be expected.

2.8   In order to protect their independence, external examiners should not concurrently act as consultants to a programme team on programme design, or be members of a panel established to revalidate the programme they examine.

2.9   In approving the appointment of external examiners for a programme, those responsible for approval will be seeking to ensure that the external examiners will be competent and impartial, and that the Board of Examiners as a whole maintains an appropriate balance and diversity in order to ensure that students are fairly assessed.

2.10   New external examiners must be briefed on their task as soon as possible after appointment, preferably by visiting the institution to meet the staff and students. The briefing will cover: the dates of examiners' meetings; the examiner's role in relation to the examining team as a whole; the objectives of the programme; its syllabuses and teaching methods; the methods of assessment and marking scheme; the regulations for the programme including those concerned with compensation for failure and opportunities for reassessment: the extent of examiners' discretion; and the University's requirements and conditions of award as set out in this Handbook.

2.11   The University requires programme regulations for validated awards to describe the nature and methods of assessment and show how external examiners will be involved in all forms of assessment which count towards the recommendation of an award. Within the terms of these regulations it is for eternal examiners to decide in detail how to fulfill the responsibilities described above.

2.12   The amount of the fee payable to an external examiner is at the discretion of the institution but is expected to be broadly in line with that paid by the Open University to its external examiners for non-validated programmes.

2.13   If an institution wishes to terminate the appointment of an external examiner, OUVS must be informed in advance of the grounds for termination.

3   Criteria for appointment

3.1   The following criteria are to be adopted during consideration of proposed external examiners. They should be considered both by institutions selecting and nominating examiners and during scrutiny of nominees.

3.2   An external examiner's academic and/or professional qualifications should be appropriate to the programme to be examined, with both the level and academic areas of those qualifications generally matching what is to be examined.

3.3   An external examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience to maintain academic standards in the context of UK higher education as a whole, as indicated by accepted attainments and standing.

3.4   An external examiner should have enough recent examining experience, preferably including having already acted as an external examiner, or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area concerned. Whenever possible, someone without direct experience of acting as an external examiner should only be appointed if there is an experienced external examiner already on the Board of Examiners.

3.5   External examiners should be drawn from a variety of institutional and professional contexts and traditions in order that the programme benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny. There should not be:

- more than one examiner for the same institution in the team of external examiners, except in a complex course or modular programme involving a large number of discrete subject areas;
- reciprocal external examining between courses or departments in two institutions;
- replacement of an external examiner by an individual from the same institution;
- an external examiner from the same institution which has been the source of examiners during the past five years.

3.6   Examiners should not have too heavy a workload in respect of external examining duties. An examiner should not concurrently hold more than two substantial undergraduate external examining appointments.

3.7   There should be appropriate balance and expertise in the team of external examiners, including:

- examining experience;
- academic and professional practitioners
- the range of academic perspectives;
- members from different types of institutions of higher education, if necessary. Appointments to the team should be phased to ensure continuity.

3.8   A proposed external examiner should not have been:
- a member of staff, a governor, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff or another external examiner in relation to the programme;
- an examiner on a cognate programme in the institution;

3.9   An individual proposed as an external examiner should not be:

- personally associated with the sponsorship of students;
- required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme;
- in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the programme;
- likely to be involved with student placements or training in the examiner's organization;
- employed as a member of staff of the Open University, unless as an Associate Lecturer.

3.10   Chief External Examiners

The appointment of a chief external examiner from within a team of approved external examiners is a matter for the institution concerned. The approval of the appointment of an external examiner who is to act in this capacity will be subject to the criteria set out above.

4   External examiners' reports

4.1   External examiners are required to make a report annually to the Academic Board of the accredited institution, to be copied simultaneously to the Open University, on the conduct of the assessments just concluded and on the standards being set and achieved including:

- the overall performance of the students in relation to their peers on comparable programmes;
- the strengths and weaknesses of students;
- the quality of knowledge and skills (Both general and subject specific and including any work-based or work-related aspects) demonstrated by the students and in the light of agreed subject benchmarks, and the national qualifications framework;
- the structure, organization, design, marking and fairness of all assessments;
- the quality of teaching as indicated by student performance;

- the lessons of the assessments for the curriculum, syllabus, teaching methods and resources of the programme, and feedback on whether issues previously raised have been addressed;
- other recommendations arising from the assessments.

4.2 It is expected that such reports will be received no later than two months following the final meeting of the Examination Board at which awards are decided. The Open University has a specimen format for the submission of reports which accredited institutions and external examiners are expected to use.

4.3 The purpose of the report is to enable the institution's Academic Board to judge whether the programme is meeting its stated objectives and to make any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next revalidation. Institutions are required to give feedback to external examiners on action taken in response to their reports.

4.4 Accredited institutions are required under their accreditation agreements to provide OUVS with an annual report for approved programmes which includes an account of the responses made to the issues raised by external examiners. Where an external examiner's report issues which call into question the quality of the programme, or the standard of the award, OUVS requires an immediate account of the measures being put in place to consider the issues and identify and rectify deficiencies.

Validation Services

External Examiner Report Form

Guidance Notes

Section A: General Information

Programme and external examiner details.

Section B: Main Report

The reporting structure of this section is intended to help draw out issues which may require attention by the Institution or the University. It should not be seen as limiting in any way the range of issues which may be addressed or the level of detail given. The report will be considered as part of the annual evaluation process and, as such, external examiners are encouraged to be as frank and open as possible but avoiding wherever possible references to individual staff or students. External examiners' attention is also drawn to *OUVS Regulations relating to External Examiners*, which should be forwarded by accredited institutions to their external examiners.

Signed hard copies of the Sections A and B should be sent to:
1.   The Head of the Institution
2.   The Vice Chancellor of the Open University c/o OUVS, 344-354 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP

Section C: Summary Report (*To be completed only by Chief External Examiners or by those who are the only external examiner for a programme, If you are unsure, please check with your appointing institution.***)**

Following the publication in October 2003 of the HEFCE "Information on quality and standards in higher education" report, this section is a summary of the examiners' findings intended for publication on the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website. *Summaries will be published anonymously unless examiners ask to be named.*

This summary section should be completed electronically and sent to:

1. Accredited institution to give them the opportunity to make any comments in response to the summary report for publication.
2. OUVS on OUVS-External-Examiners@open.ac.uk .

Section A: General Information

This form is intended to be completed electronically. Boxes will expand as you type.

Institution:	
Programme:	
Subject examined:	
Name of examiner:	
Address:	
E-mail:	
Current year of appointment	

Section B: Main Report

Please indicate the range of assessed material and information provided by the institution on which your report is based.

Please comment as appropriate on:

1. Whether the standards set are appropriate for the award, or award element, by reference to any agreed subject benchmarks, qualifications framework, programme specification or other relevant information.

2. The quality of students' work, their knowledge and skills (both general and subject-specific) in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere.

3. The strengths and weaknesses of the students

4. The quality of teaching and learning, as indicated by student performance

5. The quality of the curriculum, course materials and learning resources

6. The quality and fairness of the assessments, in particular their:

   (i) design and structure

   (ii) relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes of the programme

   (iii) marking

7. The administration of the assessments, operation of examination boards, briefing of external examiners, access of external examiners to essential materials, etc.

8. Have all the issues identified in your previous report been addressed by the institution?

   YES/NO – please delete as appropriate

   If no, please comment

9. Any other comments 77	
Signed:	
Date:	

Section C: Summary Report

This section is intended to be completed only by chief external examiners or by those who are the only external examiner for a programme. **If you are unsure, please check with your appointing institution.**

Once completed, this section should be sent electronically to OUVS on OUVS-External-Examiners@open.ac.uk, and to institutions in order to give them the opportunity to describe any actions taken in response to the report.

Title of report	[Title of award], delivered at [Name of institution]
Link to programme specification	http://
Date of report	
Academic year	
JACS codes	
Departments (optional)	
Instructions Please complete the following template, typing your text into the box beneath each heading, as indicated. Please only type into the spaces provided, using simple text formatting such as bold & italic. A list of supported formatting can be found at the end of this template.	

Home institution and/or other professional/institutional affiliation of external examiners.
Type your text here

'In the view of the examiners, the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject.'
Is the above statement correct (Yes/No)
Type yes or no

If you have stated 'no', or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.
Type your text here

'In the view of the examiners the standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which they are familiar.'
Is the above statement correct (Yes/No)
Type yes or no
If you have stated 'no', or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.
Type your text here

'In the view of the examiners, the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.'
Is the above statement correct (Yes/No)
Type yes or no
If you have stated 'no', or if you wish to give additional information, please do so below.
Type your text here

Where appropriate, a description or bullet point list of any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes, that would be worth drawing to the attention of external audiences.
Type your text here

Where appropriate a description or bullet point list of actions taken by the HEI in response to the report. This would be completed subsequently by the HEI, normally in response to stated shortcomings.
Type your text here